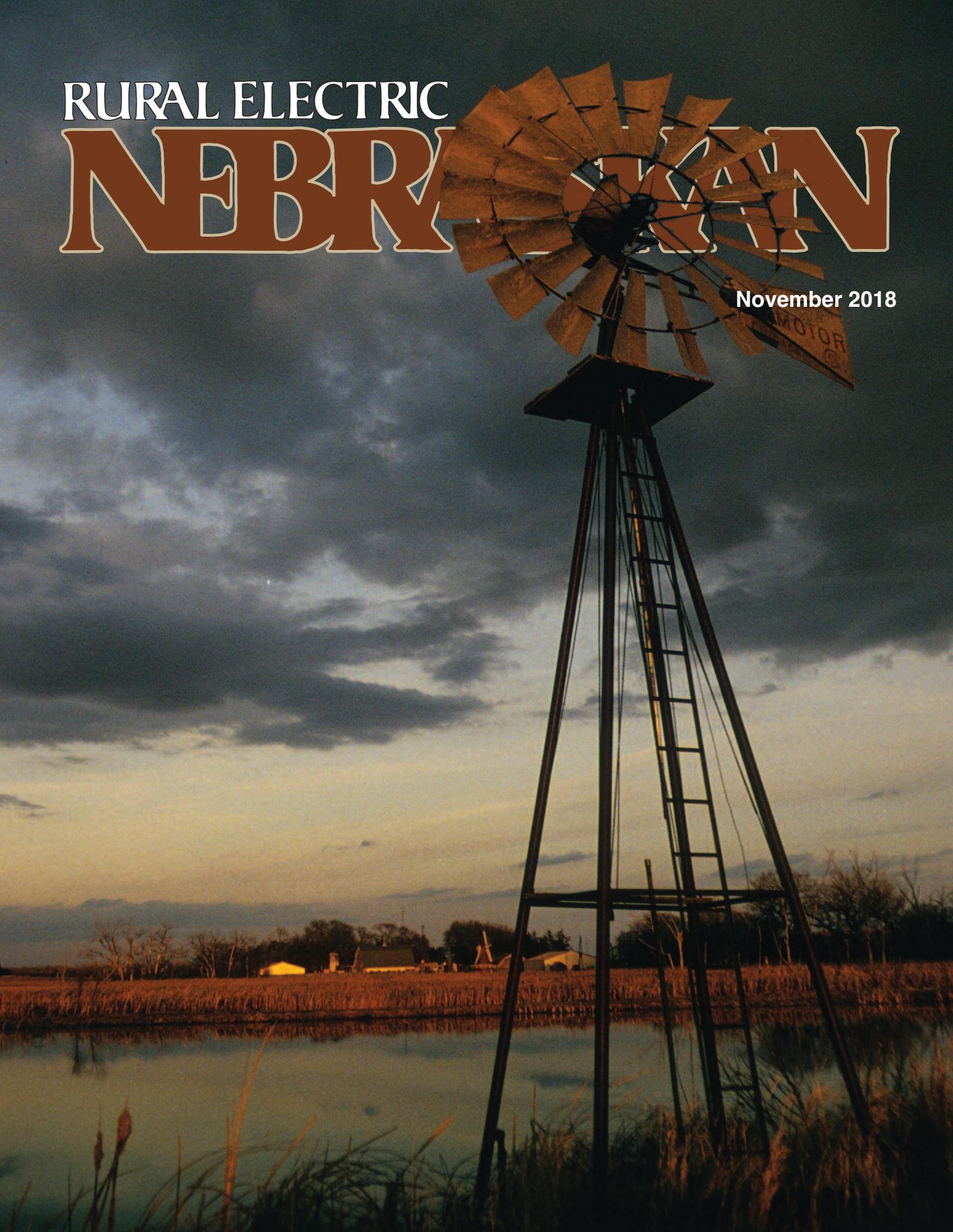


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November 2018



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Because wintertime brings its own set of challenges to staying safe, you should prepare for extreme weather and to stay home during storms and their aftermath whenever possible. In preparing for a winter storm, the folks at SafeElectricity.org offer some helpful suggestions.

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On the cover

Sandhills Images photographer Bob Rooney captured this shot of a windmill and an approaching storm. He is a farmer and photographer from Brewster, Neb.



by Wayne Price

Prepare for the potential of an electrical outage

The first time I experienced black ice began with a scream and ended with my car in the ditch. Luckily I wasn't hurt and my car wasn't damaged. I was able to get a neighbor to pull my car out with his tractor. I was 16 at the time and did just about everything wrong when driving on black ice.

The first thing I did was hit the brakes. Then as the car started to slide, I turned the steering wheel and attempted to accelerate out of the slide. I was also driving too fast for the conditions but at 16 years old, "slow down" wasn't part of my vocabulary.

Winter driving can be tricky, especially when it comes to road ice. It's worse when it's the kind you can't see: black ice. While Black Ice is a good name for a mediocre AC/DC album from 2008, it's a terrible one for a road hazard. Black ice is completely clear and allows you to see the road underneath. That makes it extremely difficult to know when it's right in front of you.

Black ice is actually just like regular ice. It forms as a glaze on surfaces like roads, sidewalks and driveways because of a light freezing rain or because of melting and re-freezing on surfaces. Black ice usually forms just about the freezing point. Sometimes black ice will form on the highway due to the heat of tires on the road combined with the freezing temperature. It is always a smart idea to keep an eye on the weather and highway reports before you leave the house or office.

Black ice forms most commonly at night or in the early morning when the temperatures are at their lowest, or when the sun hasn't had a chance to warm the roads.

While it's hard to know when a winter storm might cause black ice, or worse, when it might knock out power to your home, it's easy to prepare for a power outage.

Here's a few tips to help you plan for unexpected power outages that sometimes come with winter storms.

- Listen to weather forecasts every day so you'll know when high winds or heavy snows or ice are on the way. That kind of winter weather is most likely to affect power lines.

- Prepare an outage kit that contains: a battery-powered radio, fresh batteries, a flashlight, candles, matches, a wind-up clock,

bottled water, and paper plates and plastic utensils.

- Keep a stock of canned food in your cupboard, along with a manual can opener. Consider buying a camp stove and fuel that you can use (outdoors only, please) if you can't cook on your electric stove.

- Tape your rural electric utility's outage report phone number on your refrigerator so it will be handy if you must report an outage. Don't expect your neighbors to call in the outage.

- Pile a few extra blankets and sweaters together so you can find them easily if the heat goes off. Be sure to dress in layers to stay warm.

- Teach children to stay away from fallen or sagging power lines. They could be energized and dangerous, even if the power is out.

- Winterize your house to help keep warm air in by insulating walls and attics, caulking and weather-stripping doors and windows, and installing storm windows or covering windows with plastic.

- Clear leaves and debris from rain gutters; repair roof leaks and cut away tree branches that could fall on a house or other structure during a storm.

- Insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic and allow faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing.

- It's a good idea to keep fire extinguishers on hand, and make sure everyone in your house knows how to use them. House fires pose an additional risk, as more people turn to alternate heating sources without taking the necessary safety precautions.

If the electricity goes out, rest assured that your rural electric utility is working to get the lights back on as quickly as possible. But in case it takes a while, it is better to be prepared that sit in the dark.



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ON A MISSION TO HIRE VETERANS

by Paul Wesslund

Public power districts and electric cooperatives are working to make even better use of a powerful source of energy—military veterans.

“Veterans, active military and their spouses are some of our greatest assets as employees,” says Michelle Rostom, director of workforce development for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). “They are mission-driven. When we think about providing safe, reliable and affordable power, we know our veterans—whatever their job—are focused on making sure we are operating safely, and that we are creating a reliable electric network for co-op members.”

Rostom spends a lot of her time getting more veterans hired by electric utilities in her role as program manager for NRECA’s initiative called “Serve Our Co-ops; Serve Our Country.”

The program launched in January 2016 “to honor and employ veterans,” said Rostom.

Since then, the program has been forming a coalition of rural electric utilities and other groups to focus attention on the benefits of hiring veterans, and to actually hire more veterans.

In announcing the program, Jim Matheson, CEO of NRECA, said, “Our military veterans deserve our unending gratitude for their service to our country, on Veterans Day and every day. Veterans possess many of the qualities sought by electric

utilities, including a deep commitment to service and an uncompromising work ethic. More than 200,000 service members transition out of the military to civilian life each year, and we’d like to tap into that talent to help fill the thousands of co-op jobs opening up.”

Hiring veterans is certainly a decent thing to do, but Rostom lists why it makes business sense as well.

“They understand their role and they go out and execute it,” she says. “They bring leadership skills, they work in teams and look out for each other in that kind of ‘brotherhood.’ They work in all types of weather. They are disciplined. They show up on time. Those are professional competencies that not every job applicant brings with them, but you

find them in the military.”

The initiative grew out of broader strategic planning by NRECA. That plan envisioned that 25,000 jobs at electric co-ops would need to be filled in the next few years.

“We are racing to make sure we have the right talent applying for our jobs,” says Rostom.

Part of that work has been developing and distributing information to bring attention and advice aimed at connecting veterans with rural electric utility jobs. A series of three checklists published by the program helps guide public power districts and electric co-ops in setting up a veteran hiring effort. The checklists show utilities how to recognize veterans, contact groups in



Military veterans meet with rural electric utility leaders at a Veterans in Energy event.

their communities for broad-based effectiveness and bring attention to the skills and abilities veterans offer.

Some of those skills and abilities might not be immediately obvious, says Rostom, like what they learn by having to change their job and their residence every few years.

“They are trained to learn,” she



Jim Matheson, NRECA CEO, said veterans possess many of the qualities sought by electric utilities.

says. “They change jobs every couple of years, so they learn to adapt.”

Serve Our Co-ops; Serve Our Country also started a group called “Veterans in Energy,” a professional organization to go beyond hiring, by helping veterans transition into the energy workforce.

Military spouses make up another often-overlooked resource, says Rostom.

“You’ll get resumés for a spouse, and they will have big gaps in their experience,” she says. “They’ve put their career path on hold to follow their spouse around the world with the military, so don’t just discount that resumé.”

Rostom says, “They’ve had to move their family probably 10 times over the past 15 years, so they have to plan, they have to find housing, find schools, medical care—and they’re doing that without their spouse there, who is deployed somewhere. Often, they are volunteering, so they are community-focused, which is what we look for in



TIPS FOR HIRING HEROES



Rural electric utilities are proud to support veterans and those currently serving in uniform. One of the best ways to honor veterans is to ensure they can pursue rewarding careers when their military service has ended. Here are a few simple ways any business can attract qualified veteran applicants.

USE YOUR WORDS

If you’d like veterans to apply for an open position, say so in your ad. Not sure how to phrase it? Check with your state’s office of veteran’s services for language that complies with state and federal law.



TAKE AN EXTRA MOMENT

It can be hard for a civilian to make sense of military lingo in a veteran’s resumé...especially when you have dozens of applications to review. Rather than giving up and moving on to the next applicant, take a few extra moments to evaluate the veteran’s skills and think creatively about how they could apply to the position.



BUILD LOCAL CONNECTIONS

Networking and word-of-mouth are critical to the success of any business. Just as you might be a member of the local chamber of commerce or other business groups, build relationships with local veteran groups such as the VFW or American Legion.



PUBLICLY SHOW SUPPORT

Participate in local events that honor veterans, such as parades, welcome home celebrations and fundraisers. Remember that support doesn’t have to be expensive or time-consuming. Little things like flying an American flag or allowing veteran’s groups to post flyers at your business send a message about your support of veterans.



ASK FOR HELP

State and federal job centers offer many free resources to help employers hire qualified veterans. Contact your local center to see how they can help you fill your next vacancy.



the co-ops. In working with groups of volunteers, they are managing people, they are probably managing a budget, they are securing vendors for events. There are a lot of skill sets that they bring.”

Rostom continues, “Many are working on a degree while they are moving around the world. They are a phenomenal group of untapped talent we should consider. When you see that resumé, it doesn’t say military spouse, but I think it should. It totally changes the game—it shows the potential

employer why their career has been put on hold. They are smart, educated, they are project managers, they work with diverse groups of people. They’re an untapped group of talent that we don’t always think about.”

To learn more about the program, visit www.servevets.coop.

Paul Wesslund writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric utilities.



Above: The Cuming County Public Power District wellness committee includes (from left) Brian Throener, Chet McWhorter, Sheena Kampschneider and Nicki White.



Running for a good cause

The Cuming County Public Power District sponsored a 5K and 1 mile Run/Walk on Saturday, September 22 in West Point, Neb. The event was organized by the CCPPD wellness committee to promote wellness and include the community.

“We had 45 entries and our initial goal for our first year was 30,” said Nicki White, CCPPD communications manager and wellness committee member. “People could register at the office or online. Some came and registered that morning.”

The wellness committee includes Chet McWhorter, Brian Throener, Sheena Kampschneider and White.

“We had over 15 volunteers help at the event,” White said. “It was a bit chilly, but perfect for the runners.”

The event raised over \$800 to the CCPPD Operation Round Up fund. Customers have the choice of participating in the Operation Round Up program with any or all of their accounts. Participating account bills are rounded up to the next highest dollar amount and the extra money is

put into the Operation Round Up fund. The fund is then dispersed twice a year by the Operation Round Up Board to address crucial needs within the district’s service territory.

The CCPPD Operation Round-Up fund was organized in 1999 and has around \$1000 go into the fund each month. The five board members: Maria Janata (Dodge area), Brenda Bradfield (Beemer area), Kristie

Borgelt (Wisner area), Jackie Smith (Bancroft area) and Brenda Duhsman (West Point area) decide where the funds get distributed. Individuals and organizations in the CCPPD Community can apply for funding. Over \$200,000 has been awarded to local Fire & Rescue departments, churches, schools, hospitals, veteran’s memorials, and many more organizations.



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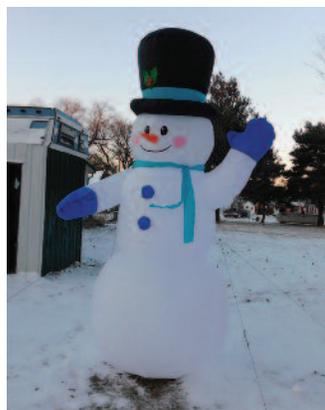
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A village full of the holiday spirit

Five years ago in Comstock, Neb., Henry Nuxoll decorated one house with holiday lights and started a tradition that has turned this small central Nebraska village into a destination for folks around the state. With the help of a few neighbors, the display now stretches across 15 blocks in 2018.

Nuxoll said he started putting up Christmas lights when he was a teenager and he decided to decorate a house in Comstock to “impress my twin brother who could see it from heaven and to impress my 15-month-old granddaughter who



couldn’t remember it longer than 15 minutes.”

Shortly after that he received an anonymous gift of lights and holiday inflatables that were left in garbage bags at the Post Office. And it just kept growing.

“I start procuring lights and inflatables in the fall” he said. “I buy lots of handcrafted displays during Junk Jaunt. I just inherited a house full last week.”

He starts to test drive new displays in the middle of September and then it is full speed ahead after Halloween. His goal is to have the lights on the day after Thanksgiving. The displays are lit until the first week in January.

It takes a dozen people to put up the displays which fill up nearly every open spot and building in the small village in Custer County. Nuxoll said the displays include

Minionville, Enchanted Forest, Grinchville, Mickey Mouse Club, Shrek’s House, Summer Fun, Old West, and Penguin Park.

Nuxoll estimated that thousands of people have viewed the holiday displays over the years. One year a gentleman came 75 miles one-way three separate times, he said.

“The best present one can ever receive is the one you give,” he said. “It’s a blast to see people smile and have a good time with their families.”

The Loup Valleys Rural Public Power District provides electricity to the village of Comstock.



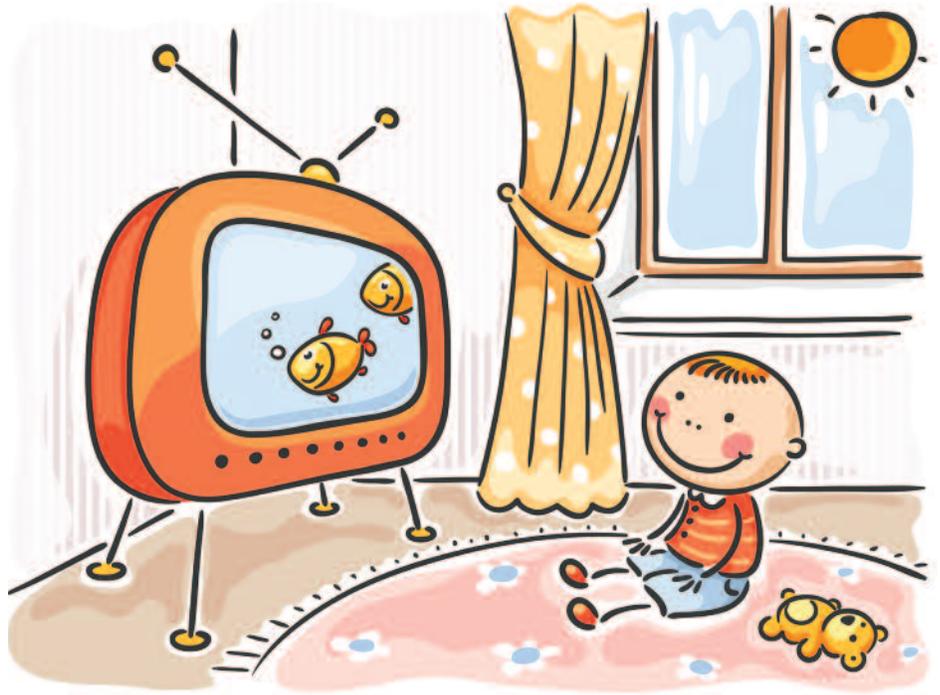
Story by Wayne Price. Photographs provided by Henry Nuxoll.

A lot of little devices add up to big energy use

Going through Grandma's basement was like going through a museum and appreciating a simpler time. In the corner was a 1940s Zenith radio that hummed for 30 seconds when you plugged it in. Once it warmed up, you could adjust the amplitude and listen to at least one of five radio stations within 30 miles. Along another wall stood a 1960s Curtis Mathis console television that looked like a buffet table. Using a remote that ran on a nine-volt battery, you could turn it on and see the tubes in the back of the set glow and emit a black-and-white picture in the front. These were Grandma's connections to the outside world. A little trickle of electricity was all she needed.

According to the World Bank, in 1966, the average American household used about 5,590 kilowatt-hours every year. As of 2013, that number shot up to about 12,985 kilowatt-hours annually. While it seems we still only need a little tickle of electricity to keep us connected today, our "plug-ins" consume much more electricity each year than Grandma's radio and TV ever used in their lifetimes.

Today, the vast majority of home electronics energy use — up to 90 percent by some estimates — is consumed by home entertainment systems and home office equipment. The remaining 10 percent consists of many small energy users, including portable devices with battery chargers. Although each of these products uses a relatively small amount of electricity on an



individual basis, they continue to proliferate rapidly and represent an opportunity to keep overall electronics energy use in check.

Did you know the Xbox 360 uses 187 watts of electricity? If you have active gamers in your home, this could add up to more than \$100 a year to operate. But, wait! You have a television connected to the Xbox, too. Add another 20 to 100 percent to the first total, and you start to appreciate the cost of connectivity.

While the most energy-efficient HDTV costs around \$30 a year to power, most power-hungry models can add more than \$160 to the electric bill each year. Then, consider you probably have a computer, laptop and/or notepad. Any cell phones? Other remotes? Security systems? A lot of little devices that keep us connected add up to significant energy use. Here are some ideas on how to manage them all:

- A cable box can draw 28 watts when it's recording a show, and 26 watts when off. Even if the TV is never on, the box will consume more than 225 kilowatt-hours annually. That potentially translates to more than \$25. Put your set (or entertainment center) on a power

strip with a master switch if you don't use it much. Power everything down until the next time you need it.

- Unplug chargers and power supplies you typically leave plugged in. Leaving a laptop computer plugged in, even when it's fully charged, can use 4.5 kilowatt-hours of electricity in a week, or about 235 kilowatt-hours a year.

- Don't use a gaming console to stream movies. They can use 45 times more power than streaming consoles, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council.

- If your television is pre-2000, know that new set technology can be more than five times more efficient for the same size of screen. Many hours of use can add up!

- Power down computers and office equipment at the end of the day. Contrary to what some think, powering electronics "up" and "down" does not impact the overall life of today's electronics and does, indeed, save energy!

When shopping for new electronics, look for the EnergyStar label. This assures you are getting a minimum level of energy efficiency and quality.

Source: NPPD EnergyWise

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The Hamilton® CapTel® Captioned Telephone converts phone conversations to easy-to-read captions for individuals with hearing loss.

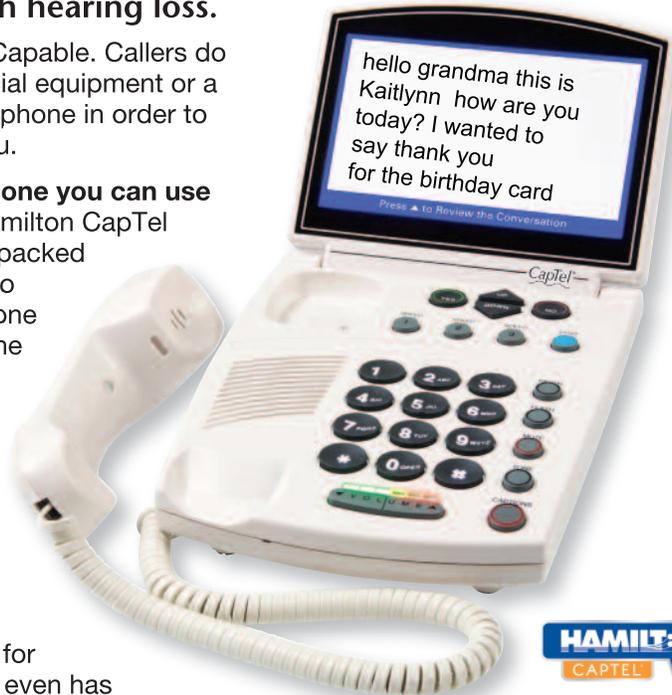
Do you get discouraged when you hear your telephone ring? Do you avoid using your phone because hearing difficulties make it hard to understand the person on the other end of the line? For many Americans the telephone conversation – once an important part of everyday life – has become a thing of the past. Because they can't understand what is said to them on the phone, they're often cut off from friends, family, doctors and caregivers. Now, thanks to innovative technology there is finally a better way.

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access. WiFi Capable. Callers do not need special equipment or a captioned telephone in order to speak with you.

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Be Ready When Mother Nature Strikes

*Now is a good time to
get prepared for a
winter storm. Don't
wait until it's too late.*



When Mother Nature strikes this winter, make sure you're ready. Hundreds of Americans are injured or killed in the winter months due to car accidents on slippery roads and in home fires caused by improper use of heaters. In addition, winter storms create a higher risk of hypothermia, frostbite, carbon monoxide poisoning, and heart attacks due to overexertion.

Because wintertime brings its own set of challenges to staying safe, you should prepare for extreme weather and to stay home during storms and their aftermath whenever possible.

Be Ready

Do all you can to prepare ahead of time for massive snowfall, blizzards or ice storms that could last for days at a time. Tune in to local radio or TV stations for the latest winter storm updates. In addition, use your cell phone to keep you informed by signing up for weather alerts. Make sure you have a portable charger and extra batteries on hand. You might also want to have a battery-operated

radio available (with extra batteries) as yet another way to listen for updates or instructions.

In preparing for a winter storm, be sure to:

- Consider special needs or medical issues in your household; have an ample supply of all medications.
- Have a supply of non-perishable food, as well as plenty of drinking water.
- Have a first aid kit handy. Make sure all medicines have not expired.
- Prepare for weather events year round by keeping a checklist of items to have on hand. Have as many of these essentials at the ready and in one place in case a storm event happens without much warning.
- As the winter months approach, prepare your home with proper insulation, caulking and weather stripping. Learn how to keep pipes from freezing. Install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors with battery backups and test them to make sure they work.
- Insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic and allow

faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing. Learn how to shut off water valves (in case a pipe bursts).

Stay Inside

Stay home during snow and ice storms and wait until roads are passable. This may sound obvious but some people think whatever they had planned is too important to miss. Whatever the commitment, it's not worth getting into an accident or finding yourself stranded.

If you do travel and drive into extreme conditions, do not leave your car to look for help. Your car should also be equipped with several items during colder months, such as a first-aid kit, portable car charger and batteries, blankets, water, snack food, a windshield scraper, extra hats, coats and mittens or gloves; tire chains; canned and compressed air with sealant for emergency tire repair; booster cables; emergency flares; and road salt and sand for traction.

If you're at home and the power goes out, please know your rural



electric utility will restore power as efficiently as possible without compromising safety. Do not turn on the stove for heat; it is not safe. Instead, use blankets, sleeping bags and warm winter coats. You can also use an up-to-code fireplace or portable heaters when used correctly.

When it comes to portable heaters, follow all instructions for use and do not:

- Place any clothing on or near a portable heater
- Put a portable heater up on the counter or other surface
- Leave it unattended
- Place on rugs or near papers or anything else that could ignite; make sure there is 3 feet of unobstructed area

When using a portable generator for power, never use it indoors and make sure it is not close to any windows, doorways or air-intake vents. Do not use it in an attached garage, even with the doors up. Never touch it with wet hands or use in areas with rain, snow, or standing water.

Source: *SafeElectricity.org*.

Don't let your generator generate trouble

Having a generator on hand, whether portable or permanent, may sound like a great idea for times when the power goes out, but misusing one is dangerous. Although they can help light your home or cool your perishable food when the neighborhood is dark, if used incorrectly you could have a much bigger problem on your hands.

When using a portable version, there are two ways to connect it to a home. The first way is with a powered circuit panel that has a power transfer switch, which monitors incoming voltage from the utility line. The circuit panel and transfer switch should always be installed by a qualified electrician. The second option is to plug in a limited number of home appliances directly into a fuel-powered portable generator with heavy-duty extension cords.

Never try to power your home by plugging a generator into a wall outlet. This is known as back feeding, and it could electrocute an electric lineman working to restore power. A permanent generator must also have a transfer switch installed by a qualified electrician to avoid back feeding. Because of the harm an incorrectly powered generator can cause, the transfer switch is required by the National Electrical Code.

The primary hazards of using a portable generator are not pretty. They include carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning from the toxic engine exhaust, electric shock or electrocution, and fire, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). According to the agency, most of the deaths and injuries associated with portable generators are from CO poisoning when generators are used indoors or in partially enclosed spaces. A permanent or standby generator also has

significant risks if not installed by a qualified electrician. Installing one is extremely dangerous and definitely not a DIY project.

Portable versions are less expensive than permanent or standby models and power only select appliances. The most expensive permanent generators—standby versions that are permanently installed and power most of the appliances in your home—are convenient but pricey. The average permanent system costs around \$10,000.

Safe Electricity points to other important safeguards to take when using a generator:

- Operate a portable generator in well ventilated locations outdoors away from all doors, windows and vent openings to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. The instructions that come with it are not meant for the recycle bin. Read and follow them; they are important.

- Turn the generator on before using it. Once it's running, turn your appliances and lights on one at a time to avoid overloading the unit. Generators are for temporary use and limited load; prioritize your needs.

- Never use a generator in a puddle or standing water and never touch with wet hands.

- To protect a portable generator from moisture, operate it on a dry surface under an open, canopy-like structure.

- Never use or install a generator in an attached garage, even with the door open.

- Turn off portable generators and let them cool down before refueling. Never refuel a generator while it is running.

- Keep children and pets away from all generators, especially portable ones. Many generator components are hot enough to burn you during operation.

Say goodbye to your old electric blanket

If your electric blanket has seen its better days, especially if it's a decade old or more, it's time to replace it. Throw it out and don't donate it, as it could be a fire hazard. Older electric blankets are more apt to be worn through or damaged, and they and their 100 feet of wiring account for thousands of worldwide injuries and deaths each year.

Fans of toasty and warm beds should inspect their electric blanket frequently, regardless of its age. Occasionally, a newer blanket or even one that's fresh out of the bag could have a wiring issue, so always test your blanket before using for the first time and once you start using it, inspect it often.

When inspecting your plug-in blanket or throw, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Division recommends looking for cracks or breaks in wiring, plugs and connectors. Also look for dark, charred or frayed spots on either side of the blanket. If your electric blanket has any of these characteristics, throw it away, as it may be a potential fire hazard.

When purchasing a new one, make sure it has been tested by a reputable



testing laboratory such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL). Also be sure to read and follow the manufacturer's instructions. When using, it's better to warm your bed with the blanket before going to bed (don't leave it unattended, though), and turn it off before climbing in.

Safe Electricity reminds you even if your electric blanket is in good shape, it still requires a little extra care compared to a traditional blanket:

- Don't allow anything on top of the blanket when in use, like a comforter, bedspread or even pets, which may cause the blanket to overheat. In addition, pet claws can cause rips and tears, which may expose the wiring

Know the Facts

electric blanket safety

and create shock and fire hazards.

- Do not use an electric blanket that is wet, soiled or wrinkled.

- Do not tuck in an electric blanket, which can cause excessive heat build-up.

- Don't store the blanket folded; instead, roll it for storage, which puts less stress on the internal wires. A better option is to store flat if you can, such as on a spare bed.

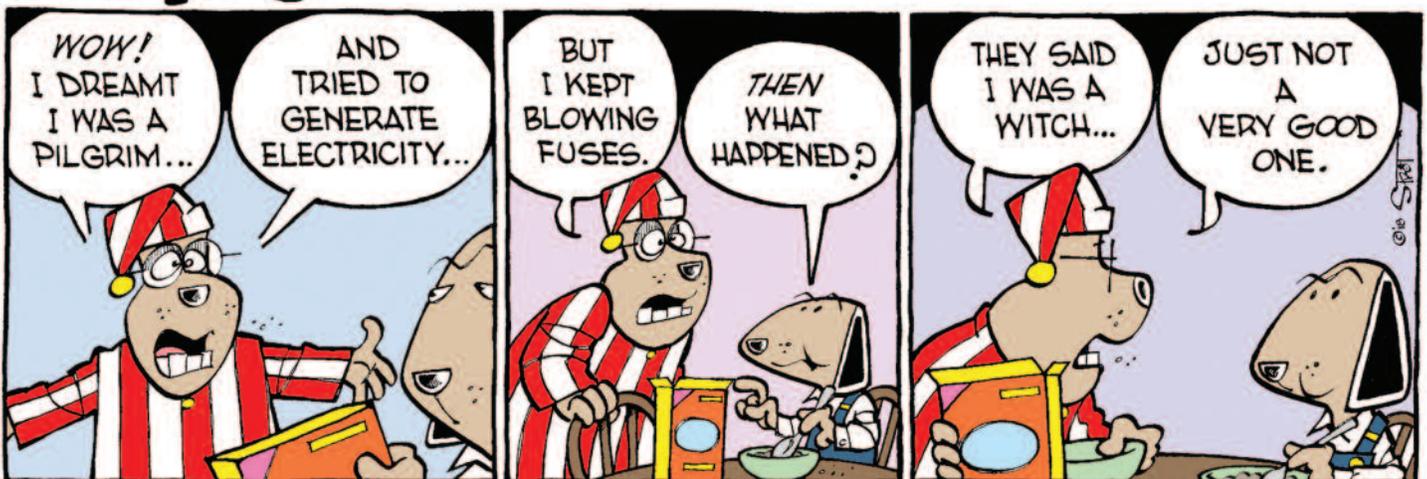
- Do not leave any heating appliance unattended.

- Don't wash it often. Repeated washings can damage the electrical circuitry. (Follow proper instructions when washing; usually the spin cycle is not recommended.)

- Do not sleep or lounge on top of the electric blanket.

Learn more about heated appliance safety and other safety tips at SafeElectricity.org.

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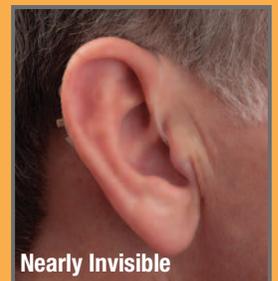
A study by the National Institute on Aging suggests older individuals with hearing loss are significantly more likely to develop Alzheimer's and dementia over time than those who retain their hearing. They suggest that an intervention — such as a hearing aid — could delay or prevent this by improving hearing!

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Efficient options for the holidays

by Pat Keegan

Q: My husband and I love decorating our home with holiday lights every year, but I feel guilty about the higher energy bill we get in January. How can we light up the holidays without wasting electricity?

A: It's a shame that holiday lighting can lead to higher energy bills, but the good news is, there are strategies that can save you money without dampening your holiday spirit!

One of the best ways to save energy is LED lights, which use about 80 percent less energy than incandescent bulbs. The amount of money you can save depends on a lot of factors, including your electric rate and how many hours your holiday lights are turned on.

We've seen a number savings estimates in energy costs. One report said that replacing five strings of traditional incandescent outdoor lights with LED bulbs could lower your bill from about \$14 to 22 cents. Another reported that replacing incandescent lights on a typical indoor tree with LED bulbs could lower the monthly cost from \$15 to \$2.

The reason incandescent bulbs are so inefficient is that at least 90 percent of their energy is converted into heat, not light. LEDs, by contrast, convert virtually all their energy to light. This means up to 20 strings of LED lights can be linked together, whereas incandescent sets are typically limited to between three and

five strings in a chain. The efficiency of LED lights also makes them safer because they generate so much less heat.

Aside from their energy efficiency, LED lights can last longer—around 200,000 hours or more, which is about 25 times longer than incandescent lights. The bulb is more durable because it is made of an epoxy instead of glass.

But not all LEDs are created equal. An LED that is not designed properly



LED bulbs can be used indoors or out and are an efficient way to provide bright, cheerful light.

can flicker, change color or draw power even when it's turned off. To avoid these problems, purchase EnergyStar-rated LEDs. To qualify for the EnergyStar rating, LED products must use 75 percent less energy than incandescent lighting and pass a number of additional tests.

The drawback of switching over to LED lights is the upfront cost. Incandescent bulbs can be purchased for 19 to 50 cents each, while a replacement LED will likely cost \$1 or more. But one estimate we ran across showed the estimated cost of buying and operating standard C-9 lights for 10 seasons is \$122 for incandescent bulbs and \$18 for LEDs. Plus, the LED lighting is more likely

to last the full 10 seasons, meaning less trips to the store!

There are other ways to cut energy expenses. You can use decorative solar light sets, which store energy during the day and release light during the night. Timers are also a good idea because they can reduce energy use, especially if you don't always remember to turn the lights off before bedtime.

Innovative decorating ideas can make your display more dynamic and interesting, which might help you get by with fewer lights. This could reduce energy costs and still keep your holidays bright:

- Color-changing LED lights can cycle through the colors in sequence and can even be set to change colors in response to music.

- A laser light projector sits on the ground or other flat surface and projects multi-colored patterns onto the wall of your house. Most include a timer function and may come with a remote control and additional features.

They come in a range of prices from \$20 up to \$150 or more.

- You can recreate the excitement of a laser light show (using LED lights) by installing a smart lighting system that creates pre-set or programmable light shows through your smart phone or other smart devices.

- For maximum effect with the smallest amount of energy use, try distributing the lighting across a broader space. In the spaces between light, add reflective ornaments and decorations to increase the effect of the lights and add interest.

I hope these tips help raise your holiday spirits without giving you the budget blues in January!

High West Energy CFO joins Nebraska LEAD

Lindsay Forepaugh, the Chief Financial Officer of High West Energy, recently completed her first week as part of the prestigious Nebraska LEAD (Leadership Education/Action Development) program.

Nebraska LEAD is the state's premier agricultural leadership development program. It attracts a large number of accomplished applicants every year, and from that talent pool, no more than 30 women and men are chosen to participate.

"I am honored to be selected as one of the Nebraska LEAD fellows," said Forepaugh, who completed her first session of the program on Sept. 20 at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. "Over the next two years, this program will provide me with countless valuable opportunities to gain experience and perspectives from agriculturalists in Nebraska, the U.S.,

and those I encounter during our international seminar."

Forepaugh holds a Bachelors of Science degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Economics, and a Masters in Business Administration degree with an emphasis in Finance. After spending the first chapter of her career distinguishing herself in the oil and gas industry, she joined High West Energy as the CFO five years ago.

Forepaugh, a resident of Kimball, Nebraska, and the rest of the LEAD Fellows will participate in 12 monthly three-day seminars across Nebraska, a 10-day national study/travel seminar, and a two-week international study/travel seminar.



Lindsay Forepaugh

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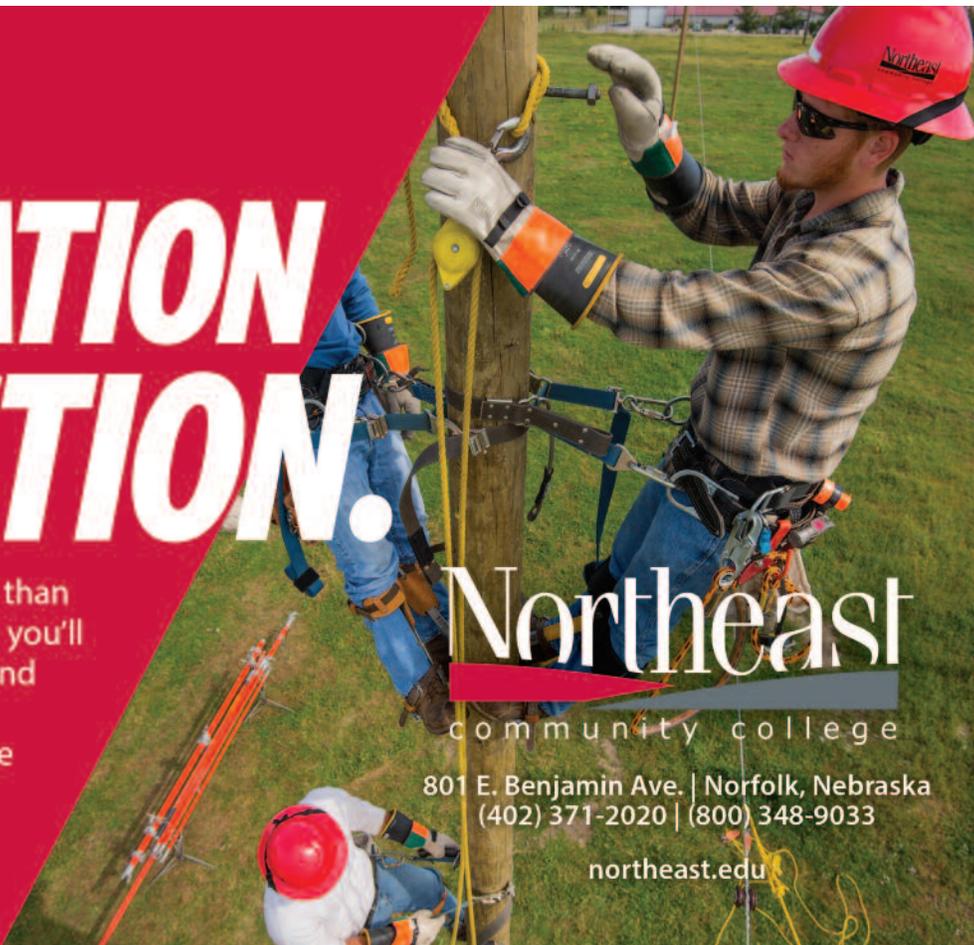
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Tasty brunch dishes to serve your guests

Both first-time and experienced hosts know holiday entertaining is about more than serving one large feast for family and friends. This season, think outside the dinner table and incorporate tasty brunch dishes into your holiday planning to help keep guests satisfied morning, noon and night.

Arm yourself with everything you need for effortless holiday hosting. Whether you're making a hearty breakfast or a sweet dessert, Smithfield's online Holiday Hub has entertaining tips and simple recipes for cooking up flavor-filled dishes all season long. With guests coming from out of town or kids returning home from school, hosts can rest assured knowing every meal is covered.

Try adding savory, slow-smoked bacon to a recipe like this Bacon Lattice Breakfast Tart with Spinach and Mushrooms. Or serve guests these Pull-Apart Rosemary Sausage Rolls made with premium pork sausage and flaky biscuits for robust flavor any time of day.

Find more holiday inspiration at Smithfield.com/HolidayHub.



Bacon Lattice Breakfast Tart with Spinach and Mushrooms

- 6 slices Smithfield thick-cut bacon, any flavor**
- 1 cup sliced cremini or button mushrooms**
- 3 cups lightly packed baby spinach**
- 1 refrigerated prepared pie crust**
- 6 large eggs**
- 1 cup half and half**
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese**
- 1/2 teaspoon salt**
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**

Heat oven to 350 F.

In skillet, cook bacon over medium heat 5-6 minutes, or until slightly rendered and beginning to curl. Remove bacon from pan and drain on paper towels until cool enough to handle. Drain all but 1 tablespoon fat from pan and cook mushrooms over

high heat 4-5 minutes, or until softened and any moisture in pan has evaporated, stirring occasionally. Add spinach leaves and cook 1 minute, or until just wilted.

Line 9-inch pie plate with pie crust, working crust up sides with fingers; refrigerate until needed. In bowl, lightly whisk eggs and stir in half and half, Parmesan, salt and pepper; reserve.

Add mushrooms and spinach to egg mixture and stir to combine. Pour into pie crust and bake 20-25 minutes, or until eggs are begin to set. Increase oven temperature to 400 F. Arrange bacon loosely in woven lattice form on top of pie and return to oven. Bake 18-20 minutes, or until bacon begins to crisp and crust is golden brown.

Let cool on wire rack 10-15 minutes before serving.



Pull-Apart Rosemary Sausage Rolls

- 1 pound Smithfield Hometown Original Fresh Sausage Roll
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped rosemary leaves, plus sprigs for garnish (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon water
- 2 cans (12 ounces each) refrigerated small biscuits (20 biscuits total)

Heat oven to 400 F. In bowl, unpackage sausage and lightly mix with rosemary and pepper. Divide into 20 pieces, rolling into little balls; refrigerate until needed.

In small bowl, whisk egg and water until frothy. Remove biscuits from packaging and carefully dimple centers with thumbs. Insert sausage balls in centers and place biscuits close together on lightly sprayed or greased cookie sheet. Brush exposed biscuit dough with egg wash and top with rosemary sprigs, if desired. Bake 12-15 minutes, or until biscuits are golden and sausage is cooked through. Serve warm.

White Chicken Chili

- | | |
|---|---|
| 5 large chicken breasts, cut into 1/2 inch cubes | 32 oz. chicken broth |
| 1 medium onion, chopped | 1 teaspoon salt |
| 3 garlic cloves, chopped | 2 teaspoons ground cumin |
| 2 cans (15 oz. each) great northern beans, drained and rinsed | 2 teaspoons dried oregano |
| 2 cans (15 oz. each) cannelloni beans, drained and rinsed | 2 tablespoons snipped cilantro or dried |
| 4 cans diced green chilies – undrained | 1/2 teaspoon pepper (I use garlic pepper) |
| | 2 cups sour cream |
| | 1 cup whipping cream |
| | 1 seeded jalapeno pepper (I use dried) |

Sauté chicken, onion and garlic in hot oil until chicken is no longer pink. Put in crockpot with the next nine ingredients. Cook on low for four hours. Stir in sour cream and whipping cream, heat but do not boil. Serve with tortilla chips and cheese if desired.

Marbara Kuhlman, Brady, Nebraska

Sweet and Sour Spareribs

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 3 lbs. spareribs | 1/2 cup soy sauce |
| 1/2 cup cider vinegar | 2 large onions |
| 1 cup pineapple juice | 4 slices pineapple, chopped |
| 1/2 cup sugar | |

Choose spareribs that are not fat or tough. Cut ribs into 1 1/2 inch strips. Then cut strips between bones. Grease a heavy skillet lightly add ribs and cover tightly and steam fry for 15 minutes, stirring often. Add 1/2 cup vinegar, cook uncovered for 10 minutes, stirring often. Add pineapple juice and cook uncovered for 15 minutes at a gentle boil, stirring often. Add sugar, reduce heat, cook till lightly brown, stirring constantly. Add soy sauce, cook 15 minutes more. Add onions cook five minutes more. Then add chopped pineapple and cook five more minutes. Serve while hot.

Virginia Srader, Blue Hill, Nebraska

Blizzard Party Mix

- 2 cups Rice Chex cereal
- 1 cup dry roasted peanuts
- 2 cups mini pretzels
- 20 caramels, cut into fourths
- 1 10 oz. package white chocolate chips

Put all dry ingredients in a bowl. Melt the white chocolate chips, pour over ingredients and stir to coat. Spread mixture on wax paper covered sheet pan. When cooled and hardened, break apart into small pieces.

Kelly Fischer, Humphrey, Nebraska

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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 the 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 swelling 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-pharma 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 of 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 1-800-808-6379** 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.

THESE STATEMENTS HAVE NOT BEEN EVALUATED BY THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION. THIS PRODUCT IS NOT INTENDED TO DIAGNOSE, TREAT, CURE, OR PREVENT ANY DISEASE. ALL DOCTORS MENTIONED ARE REMUNERATED FOR THEIR SERVICES. ALL CLINICAL STUDIES ON ALOECURE'S ACTIVE INGREDIENT WERE INDEPENDENTLY CONDUCTED AND WERE NOT SPONSORED BY THE AMERICAN GLOBAL HEALTH GROUP.



We salute you for your service

November is National Military Family month. Our electric co-op family appreciates the sacrifices made by our veteran and active military personnel and their families. Thank you for your service and dedication.



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