

RURAL ELECTRIC

NEBRASKAN

April 2020

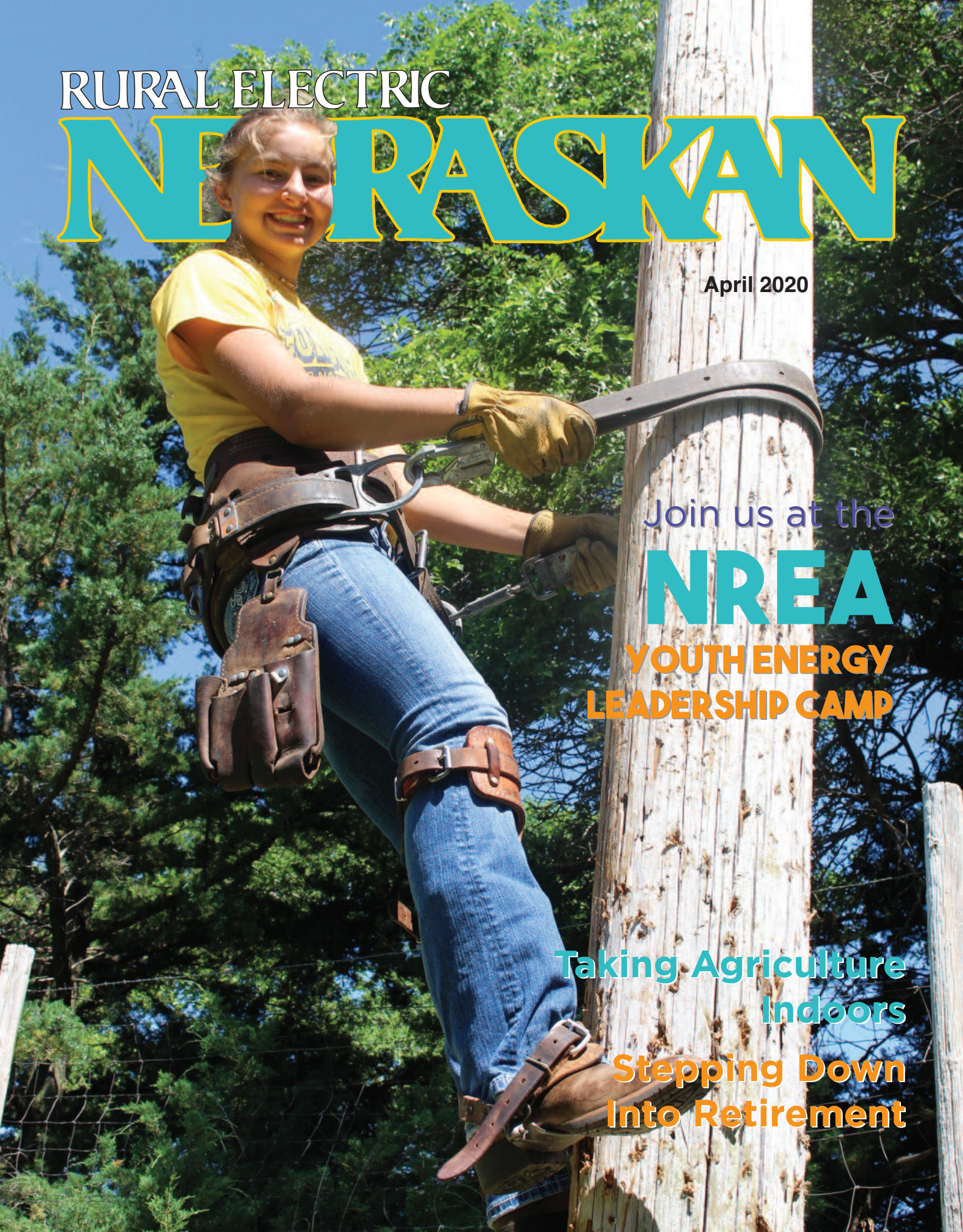
Join us at the

NREA

**YOUTH ENERGY
LEADERSHIP CAMP**

**Taking Agriculture
Indoors**

**Stepping Down
Into Retirement**



The Invention of the Year

The world's lightest and most portable mobility device

Once in a lifetime, a product comes along that truly moves people. Introducing the future of personal transportation... The Zinger.

Throughout the ages, there have been many important advances in mobility. Canes, walkers, rollators, and scooters were created to help people with mobility issues get around and retain their independence. Lately, however, there haven't been any new improvements to these existing products or developments in this field. Until now. Recently, an innovative design engineer who's developed one of the world's most popular products created a completely new breakthrough... a personal electric vehicle. It's called the **Zinger**, and there is nothing out there quite like it.

"I can now go places and do things that I wasn't able to go or do before. It has given me a new lease on life and I am so happy I found it!"

—Dana S., Texas

The first thing you'll notice about the **Zinger** is its unique look. It doesn't look like a scooter. Its sleek, lightweight yet durable frame is made with aircraft grade aluminum. It weighs only 47.2 lbs but can handle a passenger that's up to 275 lbs! It features one-touch folding and unfolding—when folded it can be wheeled around like a suitcase and fits easily into a backseat or trunk. Then, there are the steering levers. They enable the **Zinger** to move forward, backward, turn on a dime



Available in Green, Black and Blue (shown)

and even pull right up to a table or desk. With its compact yet powerful motor



The Zinger folds to a mere 10 inches.

it can go up to 6 miles an hour and its rechargeable battery can go up to 8 miles on a single charge. With its low center of gravity and inflatable tires it can handle rugged terrain and is virtually tip-proof. Think about it, you can take your **Zinger** almost anywhere, so you don't have to let mobility issues rule your life. You can even gate check it at the airport like a stroller.

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**RURAL ELECTRIC
NEBRASKAN**

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Pat Pope, president and CEO of Nebraska Public Power District, announced plans to retire after 40-plus years of service. He takes a moment to share a little insight into what his unforgettable four-decade career at NPPD has meant to him.



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Jaiden Papik gets a lesson in pole climbing at the NREA Youth Energy Leadership Camp. See the related article on Page 6. Photograph by Wayne Price





by Wayne Price

Lineworker Appreciation Day worth celebrating

Mark your calendar on April 13, 2020 to join us in celebrating a group of our state's hardest working men and women -- the electric lineworker. You probably don't even notice these well-trained and highly skilled employees working hard to keep the electricity flowing in the areas they serve. It's not until a storm strikes that most of us think about these guys.

When the power goes out, for whatever reason, Nebraska's electric linemen are the first to jump into action. Crews from neighboring systems will join in the effort to help restore power as quickly as possible. This type of mutual aid was evident last month when crews responded to damage caused by winter storms and flooding across the state.

Linemen must perform their duties safely and efficiently while wearing special gear to protect themselves. This gear often makes their tasks more difficult.

America's public power districts and electric cooperatives have designated the second Monday of April as National Lineman Appreciation Day.

On April 13, the Nebraska Rural Electric Association and its 34 member-systems will

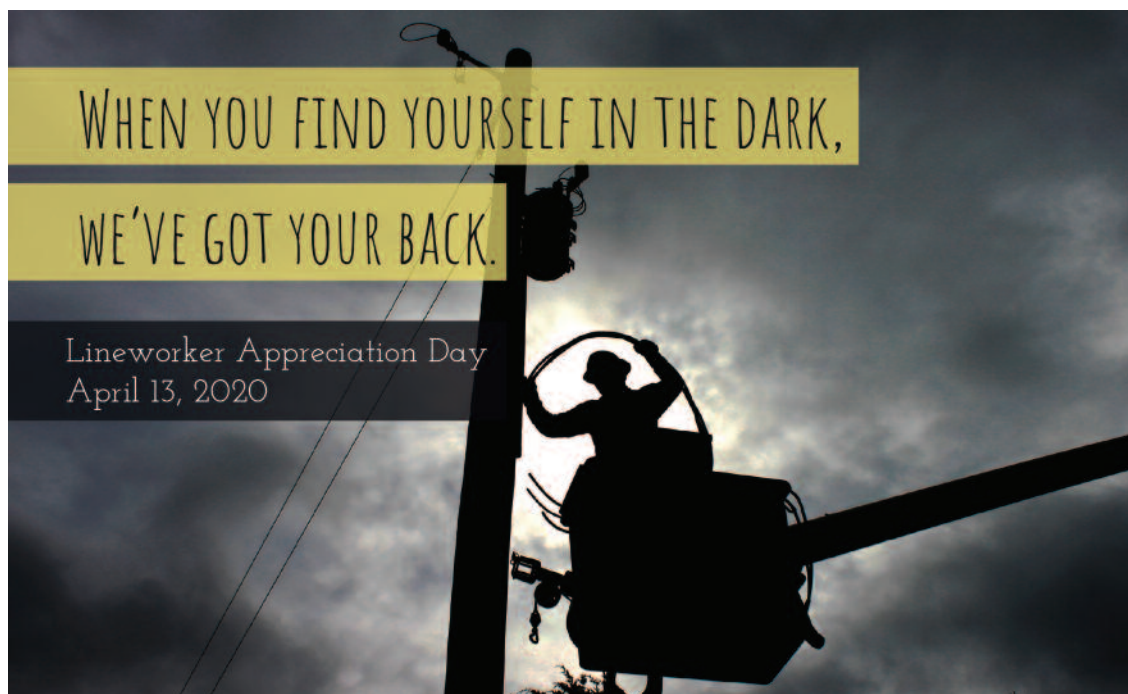
honor the hard working men and women who often work in challenging conditions to keep the lights on.

We proudly recognize all electric linemen for the services they perform around the clock in dangerous conditions to keep power flowing and protect the public's safety.

Electric linemen do not often receive the recognition they deserve. They work all hours of the day, often in hazardous conditions far from their families, going above and beyond to restore power to their communities. Our linemen, as well as linemen from across the nation, truly deserve this special day of recognition.

From restoring power after a storm to building new lines to serve customers, Nebraska's electric linemen are the face of public power in Nebraska. They play a vital role in serving customers around-the-clock with reliable and affordable electricity.

Please take a moment on April 13 and join us in expressing your appreciation for their professional contributions in all kinds of weather conditions, day and night. Use #ThankaLineworker to show your support for the men and women who light our lives.



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ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Join us at the

NREA

YOUTH ENERGY LEADERSHIP CAMP

.....
JULY 20 - 24, 2020



Each year member-systems of the Nebraska Rural Electric Association select high school students to attend the NREA Youth Energy Leadership Camp at the State 4-H Camp in the Halsey National Forest. The 2020 Youth Energy Leadership Camp will be held July 20-24.

The popular week-long camp was created to give young people a better understanding of public power, electricity, power generation and the rural electric industry. The goal is to offer a program that challenges students educationally, socially, and recreationally.

The NREA Youth Energy Leadership Camp provides a “hands-on” approach to the public power industry and member-owned businesses. The students will join other high school students from

Nebraska and Wyoming, along with adult counselors and junior counselors. The adult counselors are employees of rural electric systems who donate their time and talents to the camp. The junior counselors are campers from the previous year who are selected by their peers to return in a leadership role.

On the first day of camp, a board of directors is elected to oversee the operation of the newly formed electric power district. The board then interviews and chooses a general manager to oversee the committee activities and act as a liaison between the counselors and campers.

Every participant has a role in the workings of the camp. Students can participate in the Ambassador competition or actively seek a position on the Board of Directors.

Each student must also volunteer to serve on at least one of the committees responsible for various aspects of the camp activities. There is even a talent show where the campers can show off their talents.

A highlight of the camp involves a tour of the Kingsley Hydro Station at Lake McConaughy and Gerald Gentleman Station, a coal-fired power plant at Sutherland, Neb.

High school students who attend the energy camp may compete for a chance to participate in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association’s Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. with expenses paid by the Nebraska Rural Electric Association. Three students are chosen as part of the Ambassador competition held during camp.

The competition involves submitting an application at camp,



presenting a self-introduction speech and delivering a five-minute speech on an assigned topic. Each camper votes for three candidates following the speech with the top male, top female and person with the next highest vote total becoming next year's ambassadors. The top six finalists are invited to return to next year's Youth Energy Leadership Camp as junior counselors.

Recreational activities include basketball, volleyball and canoeing.

Camp expenses and transportation are provided by each sponsoring rural electric system. High school freshmen, sophomores and juniors whose families are customers of NREA member-systems may apply.

For more information about attending Youth Energy Leadership Camp, send the RSVP form to your rural electric provider.

2020 Youth Energy Leadership Camp RSVP Form

Name _____

Age _____ Current Grade _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone number (____) _____

Name of parents _____

Sponsoring rural electric system : _____

by Maria Kanevsky

Taking Agriculture Indoors



Agriculture is a fundamental part of our society. We greatly depend on those who farm to provide our sustenance. However, many things that can affect the agricultural industry are beginning to change. Unexpected weather patterns are becoming more common, which place a large burden on farmers by potentially ruining entire fields of crops. The availability of fresh water is declining, with aquifers around the United States depleting faster than they can be replenished. The U.S. population continues to grow, meaning there will be even more mouths to feed in the coming decades.

One potential part of the solution to these issues is to move agriculture indoors. Vertical farming, a type of indoor agriculture, is an expanding industry that can help to provide crops for a growing population.

Vertical farming is the practice of growing crops indoors in vertically-stacked layers while controlling the temperature, humidity and all other conditions that contribute to growing the ideal crop. A great amount of electricity is required to run successful operations, and some vertical farm operations can spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on their annual energy bills. Some crops need light for up to 18 hours a day, creating a fairly constant need for electricity from the utility to power the business.

Indoor agriculture only uses a small fraction of the land and water used in traditional agriculture, and there is no need for pesticides since the crops are in a controlled pest-free environment. Indoor agriculture can also maximize energy efficiency by using artificial intelligence to learn how to control lighting systems and other sensors. As electricity becomes greener, the electricity used for indoor farming will also become cleaner and release less carbon emissions for every unit of electricity used.

One of the biggest limitations to widespread indoor agriculture is the relatively high energy demand needed to run each of the operations. A majority of the energy goes towards the electricity needed to power

artificial lights to grow the crops, and most of the remaining energy goes towards climate control. Energy efficiency helps to solve this to an extent by using LED lights which are becoming increasingly cheaper and more energy efficient, allowing for vertical farming operations to save more money on overall lighting costs. LED lights can also be controlled to only generate certain colors out of the full light spectrum that plants need, such as red light or blue light, which can further reduce energy use. Rural electric utilities will need to be able to accommodate these large energy users, which requires open discussion between the indoor farming operation and the utility.

The large energy load for rural electric utilities can be a benefit to their own growth, but first, utilities need to determine if they can meet the increased energy demand, especially if supplying electricity to more than one vertical farming operation. There are ways to incorporate the new energy demand into the grid by using methods like demand response, where the utility can shut off energy to the operation during times of peak energy demand, or time-of-use rates, where applying a higher electricity rate during busy times of day can encourage the operation to run during off-peak times. Since vertical farming can operate all day, every day of the year, these indoor farms have more flexibility in running their affairs.

Although this industry has come a long way in the last few years, there is still ways to go before indoor agriculture can support entire populations. Vertical farming has mastered growing leafy green vegetables but is very limited in growing other types of produce. There are many tests and experiments being done to expand produce types, increase energy efficiency and decrease overall costs for economic viability. Despite some of these current shortcomings, vertical farming is a step in the right direction of exploring alternative methods of growing crops to help support a quickly-growing society.



Earth Day's Golden Anniversary

by Paul Wesslund

The estimated 20 million people who rallied for the first Earth Day 50 years ago might not have changed the world as much as they'd hoped, but they just might have changed it more than they thought possible.

Since that April 22 five decades ago, pollution has fallen dramatically, while energy efficiency has greatly increased. Solar energy and wind power are making serious moves toward providing a significant

share of our nation's electricity. Every major car company is expanding their electric vehicle options, and according to The Recycling Partnership, a non-profit industry group, about half the homes in the United States have some version of curbside recycling program.

At the time, even I got caught up in an Earth Day episode that illustrates another way the nation has changed its approach to the environment.

I was a senior on the high school debate team, and the topic proposed by the National Forensics League was whether the federal government should establish programs to control air and water pollution. About half of us would contend that yes, the federal government should have pollution control programs, while the other half said no. We spent our evenings filling file boxes with index cards of research to prove our side to the small panel of judges that would gather in classrooms on Saturdays for the debate tournaments.

The book that inspired Earth Day

Then, the president of the United States almost literally turned our world upside down. On July 9, 1970, less than three months after that first Earth Day, President Richard Nixon sent a reorganization plan to Congress creating the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

"...as a matter of effective and

50th Anniversary of Earth Day
April 22, 2020 marks the Golden Anniversary of Earth Day. Here are a few environmental milestones we've achieved over the years.

- Cleaner Air and Water**
In 1970, the Clean Air Act was greatly expanded and the Clean Water Act passed in 1972.
- Getting the Lead Out**
Lead was phased out as a gasoline additive by 1988.
- Restoring the Ozone Layer**
Ozone-depleting chemicals were banned in 1989.
- Better Bulbs**
Today, light bulbs use 80% less energy and last 25 times longer.
- Rising Renewables**
Today, renewable energy sources account for 11% of U.S. energy consumption.

orderly administration, additional new independent agencies normally should not be created," said Nixon's formal proposal. But in this case, it continued, the EPA was needed "... because arresting environmental deterioration is of great importance to the quality of life in our country and the world."

For some of the high school debaters, that meant suddenly switching sides—the teams defending the "status quo" of no government program on the environment now had to defend a status quo that included the EPA.

While the high school debaters scrambled to rewrite their speeches, policymakers moved boldly to create sweeping federal laws: expansion of the Clean Air Act in 1970 and enactment of the Clean Water Act in 1972.

Credit for setting the stage that made Earth Day possible often goes to Rachel Carson's 1962 book *Silent Spring*, about the effects of chemicals in the environment, especially linking the pesticide DDT with a decline in the number of bald eagles.

But two events in 1969 led more directly to that first Earth Day. In January, a three-million gallon oil spill coated beaches along Southern California, and in June, pollution in Cleveland's Cuyahoga River caught fire. Organizers used the publicity from those disasters and combined them with the 1960s tactics of college student protests for civil rights and against the Vietnam War. The time of year for Earth Day was chosen for falling after spring break and before final exams. By 1972, the federal government banned DDT.

A wacky idea for reducing acid rain

The heightened awareness brought attention to other environmental issues: the lead additive in gasoline was shown to damage health in many ways; refrigerants and solvents were among chemicals blamed for depleting the ozone layer of the atmosphere, which protects the Earth from the harshest rays from the sun;

and sulfur dioxide from coal-fired power plants was blamed for "acid rain" that was damaging forests.

A ban on ozone-depleting chemicals took effect in 1989, reversing damage to the ozone layer. Getting the lead out of gasoline and curbing acid rain got help through the 1980s with the innovative idea of pollution credits. The notion behind the credits, also known as emissions trading, had the government setting an overall industry limit on pollution rather than requiring reductions by each power plant or refinery. That way, a power plant could emit more than the limit if it could buy or trade emissions credits with another plant that was way under the allowed limit.

That might sound a little crazy, but it worked. Lead was phased out of gasoline from 1971 to 1988, and sulfur dioxide emissions have been reduced by 87% according to the EPA.

Huge gains in energy efficiency have also eased environmental impacts since 1970. LED light bulbs use as much as 80% less electricity and last as much as 25 times longer, says the U.S. Department of Energy. Cars and trucks are becoming more efficient and less polluting as well. The EPA reports that over the past 50 years, fuel economy has doubled and carbon dioxide emissions from vehicles have been cut in half.

The rise of renewable energy is another story of the past five decades. In 1970, nearly half of our electricity came from coal-fired power plants. Today, solar energy and wind power are on the rise, generating nearly 10% of electricity. Of all the electric generation being planned for 2020, more than three-fourths will come from wind or solar, according to the Energy Information Administration.

For all those achievements, environmental changes since the first Earth Day might be the perfect example of how a glass can be viewed as half-empty or half-full. Regardless, focusing on ways we can improve our environment will certainly take center stage on April 22, 2020, when we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day.

Does your cooling system need a tune up?

A \$30 EnergyWise incentive is available to homeowners that have their cooling system tuned up, regardless of what type or age of cooling system it is (air conditioner, air or water source heat pump).

The application includes a checklist of key components your contractor should inspect as well as items for discussion, such as; filter replacement schedule, proper temperature set-back practices and an understanding of the general condition of the system.


Qualifications

Incentives are available to customers who have their cooling system inspected and tuned up by an HVAC contractor.

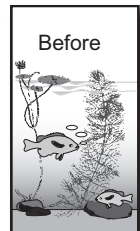

Qualifying systems include residential central - air conditioners, air source and water source heat pumps that are served by Nebraska Public Power District or its Wholesale Utility Partners.

Contact your utility for an incentive application.

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Stay safe around anhydrous ammonia

It's easier to prevent accidental spills of anhydrous ammonia than it is to treat them. Accidental exposure to the liquid fertilizer can result in serious burns, blindness and even death. Despite attention in recent years to laws regarding its transport, application, and storage, anhydrous ammonia remains a serious health risk for farmers.

Use these tips to reduce your risks:

- Always keep water handy—in your shirt pocket, on the tractor or truck, and with the nurse tank. Water, or some other non-toxic, non-caustic fluid, can be used to flush areas exposed to anhydrous ammonia.

- Always wear protective gear, such as rubber gloves, ventless goggles or a full-face shield, and a long-sleeved shirt whenever you work with anhydrous ammonia.

- Use safety chains and approved hitchpins when transporting ammonia tanks or other application equipment.

- Avoid wearing contact lenses when working with anhydrous



ammonia. Contact lenses intensify burns.

- Never put your head or body parts in direct line of valve openings.

- Remember that anhydrous is under extreme pressure, which increases on warm days. A broken hose can literally strike anywhere. Treat ammonia hoses and valves as “loaded guns” and stay clear of the safety relief valve.

- Check valves for corrosion and hoses for cracks or signs of wear.

- Relieve pressure before you disconnect or reconnect hoses or parts. Close and lock valves and disconnect hoses when the nurse tank is unattended.

For more information about how to be safe around anhydrous ammonia, read instructions that come from your chemical supplier or dealer.

Murphy



Experts recommend inspecting irrigation system each spring

While some erroneously think farmers have the winter off for vacation, Nebraska crop producers have a million things to do before planting a single seed. One includes having their irrigation systems ready to pump and provide water if rain doesn't come. If you irrigate with one or more of the 55,000 plus center pivot systems in Nebraska, do you know the expected life of sprinkler packages? While some producers may consider this a low-priority question, it only takes a few non-performing sprinkler components to make a significant decrease in yields; especially if left unchecked over several seasons.

Sprinkler packages for center pivots and lateral-move systems are designed to deliver more than 90 percent water delivery uniformity under no-wind conditions after considering system capacity, distance from the pivot point to a specific

sprinkler, spacing between sprinklers, field topography and pumping plant performance among other potential considerations. Standardization in nozzle diameters available (diameters increase in 1/128 – inch increments) does create a small amount of nonuniformity during design.

However, once installed and operational, nozzle wear, plugging, pressure regulator effectiveness, water quality, component quality, system leaks, weather damage and incorrect design parameters can dramatically decrease the rated life of outlet components and affect delivery uniformity as soon as the first time you irrigate.

Irrigation experts recommend the following simple, five-part inspection each spring before the crop canopy is present:

- Verify the system is supplied by the correct flow rate and operating

pressure.

- Compare the sprinkler sizes installed to the sprinkler design printout.

- Verify the last sprinkler is supplied with correct operating pressure when the end gun is operating and the last tower is at its highest point.

- Verify the end gun is set to run according to the design sheets.

- Verify sprinklers are not cracked or broken and deflection pads are not worn excessively.

Participating utilities will provide a \$500 incentive when producers replace all of a system's existing outlet components, such as sprinkler heads, sprayers, rotators, plates, pads and nozzles, and regulators on qualified systems. Other program requirements apply. Start by visiting with your local electric utility, or visit <https://www.nppd.com/incentives/prescriptive-irrigation> for more details.

Looking for a little extra GREEN from your fields?

As an EnergyWise partner, your local electric utility wants to help you make the most of the energy needed for irrigating with all-electric center pivot or linear tower systems. Participating utilities will provide a **\$500 incentive** when producers replace all of a system's existing outlet components, such as sprinkler heads, sprayers, rotators, plates, pads and nozzles, and regulators on qualified systems. Other program requirements apply.

Start by visiting with your local electric utility, or visit <https://www.nppd.com/incentives/prescriptive-irrigation> for more details.

STEPPING DOWN *into* RETIREMENT



By 
Patrick Pope
NPPD PRESIDENT & CEO

In February, I formally announced plans to NPPD's Board of Directors to retire from the District after 40-plus years of service - nine of which I've been privileged to be president and CEO. Upon planning for my next stage in life, I found myself reflecting on the impact of this unforgettable four-decade career. I'd like to share a little insight into what my time at NPPD has meant to me.

1. What's the greatest lesson you learned at NPPD?

I learned not to underestimate the power of people when they decide to pull together. Our teammates and wholesale partners take pride in a job well done. They are dedicated to their jobs, each other and Nebraskans. Public power is a wonderful institution with many benefits. I was hired at NPPD as an engineer in the '80s, but it took me a few years to fully appreciate the impact public power has on our customers and the state. So long as we stay true to our mission, the sky's the limit.

2. What is the biggest misconception folks have about public power or NPPD?

Many don't realize the benefits – that public power is not-for-profit, provides unparalleled reliability at a low cost, allows for local control and provides a means for dollars to stay in your communities. Of course, one of our biggest benefits is superior customer service. Our customers need to know – aside from operating safely, they are our number one priority. After all, in the very beginning, we provided rural electrical service to Nebraskans when investor-owned utilities didn't.

3. What's the biggest change you saw take place at NPPD?

I always go back to the early 1990s when deregulation of the energy industry was occurring. But really, transformation is ongoing, and it started in the early '80s when I first started at NPPD. We didn't have personal work computers back then, so we'd work on the mainframe computer. I've always been interested in technology, and so I would use my Apple II from home to work in VisiCalc – one of the first spreadsheet computer programs. Other notable milestones in NPPD history would be the creation of regional transmission organizations and centralized markets, implementation of federal tax subsidies for renewable energy, and technological advances, particularly our newest endeavor with Paige Wireless to bring a nonproprietary means for our customers to collect data and achieve quality broadband services.

4. What was the most difficult part of your job over the years?

Hands down, developing my "people" skills. We didn't have Human Resources business partners back in my early management days. We were on our own when addressing personnel issues.



5. What was your most notable, career-related accomplishment?

When we moved into our new Doniphan Control Center in the 1990s, the floor plan was almost immediately out of date because centralized markets were growing in popularity. We quickly needed to designate an area to the real-time market and energy supply. I took a tiny corner office in the back to accommodate the necessary floor plan – didn't mind one bit. The pace of change continues to accelerate. There is no silver bullet – we need continuous exposure to be able to embrace these changes when they make practical business sense.

6. What will you most miss about NPPD?

I've been to a retirement party or two in my day. It's never the work people miss; it's the relationships. Our people help get the job done, but they also make working fun. We spend most of our time here – camaraderie is so important. We used to do more with membership societies – golf and softball leagues. It may be that we need to get back to that ideology. To all I have had the pleasure working with over the last four decades – thank you for giving me one of the best experiences an old Nebraska farm boy could ask for.

7. What excited you most about working at NPPD?

Working on the 2016 wholesale power contract was huge. Maintaining our competitive pricing by agreeing to meet conditions in which NPPD's wholesale rates ranked in the best quartile among our peers was seen by some to be too restrictive and self-constraining. To me, it was the best way to align our organization with our values and remain true to our customer focus. There are real ramifications if we don't meet this requirement, and it's enabled us to dig deep into data like never before.

8. What advice do you have for NPPD and our customers?

NPPD's team is well-positioned for the future. We enjoy a strong financial position, wholesale and retail rates are stable and very competitive, and our operations are running well. Retail rates have remained stable going into a seventh consecutive year and wholesale rates for the past

three years. Cooper Nuclear Station has earned excellence ratings from the Institute of Nuclear Plant Operators two of the past three evaluation cycles, a conversion project to burn hydrogen rather than coal as a fuel at Sheldon Station is currently in the design phase, and Gerald Gentleman Station continues to be one of the most cost-effective power plants in the country. Additionally, NPPD's carbon free energy mix for Nebraska customers has averaged roughly 60 percent over the past five years, reaching 68 percent in 2019. All these things are great, but we can't lose sight of why we're here – to serve our customers. We can't get caught up in the latest fads – we must look back at the true meaning of public power and understand that its success hinges on withstanding the test of time.

9. What specialized skills does your successor, Tom Kent, bring to the table?

Tom and I have worked together for years. He's immersed himself in the business, establishing a broad base of contacts and support through his leadership in the Southwest Power Pool, Midwest Reliability Organization, Rocky Mountain Electric League and NPPD's Competitive Advantage Team. He is intimately knowledgeable of the energy industry and NPPD's challenges and goals, having worked closely with stakeholders on the R-Project. Tom has a solid background in nuclear from time spent as a Navy nuclear instructor, so he knows the uniqueness and value of nuclear. I have no doubt he will keep NPPD moving forward with our goals, his eyes on our vision and mission each step of the way.

10. What lies in your future for retirement?

I recently realized tomorrow is promised to no one. My wife, Jackie, and I are going on an Alaskan cruise in August, and next February we look forward to visiting Lake Havasu in Arizona. There are a slew of shipwrecks along the Florida Panhandle I'd like to don my scuba gear to explore, as well.



Four considerations before replacing windows

by Pat Keegan

Q : Our home's windows are very old, and when the weather is cold, we can feel a chill when we stand near them. Do you think it's worth replacing them?

A : First, prepare yourself for a bit of sticker shock when you get your first bid for replacing windows. To help you decide if replacement is the right move, you'll want to consider a few factors.

Increased Comfort

The chill you feel near your windows when it's cold out is likely due to radiant heat loss. When you're near a cold surface, such as a window, you can feel chilled even if the temperature inside your home is over 70 degrees. Your body is much warmer than the surface of the window, and heat radiates from warm to cold. The inside surface of an inefficient, single-pane window will be much colder on a winter night than that of a double- or triple-pane window.

Window coverings are one unique approach to increasing the comfort level of your home. Curtains and

blinds are very effective at reducing radiant heat loss in the winter and can even block some unwanted heat gain in the summer.

Another aspect to comfort is the sun. If you have cold winters but lots of winter sunshine, you might enjoy the comfort and warmth of the sun streaming through your windows on a cold clear day. If that's the case, you should take this into consideration as you ponder window replacement. Some windows are better at letting the sun's heat into the home than others.

Appearance and Function

Since your windows are older, new wood- or vinyl-framed windows can act as an exterior facelift. But keep in mind, if you own an older home with classic wooden windows, vinyl replacements might look out of place. It's possible to buy new windows that match the style of some older wooden windows, or you could decide to apply a little elbow grease to get them back into shape. Wooden windows, even if they were built before 1960, can last the life of the home.

Windows can provide ventilation, which sometimes improves comfort more cost-effectively than air conditioning. Windows also need to be cleaned occasionally. If your existing windows don't provide ventilation or they are hard to clean, replacing them could solve these problems.

Resale Value

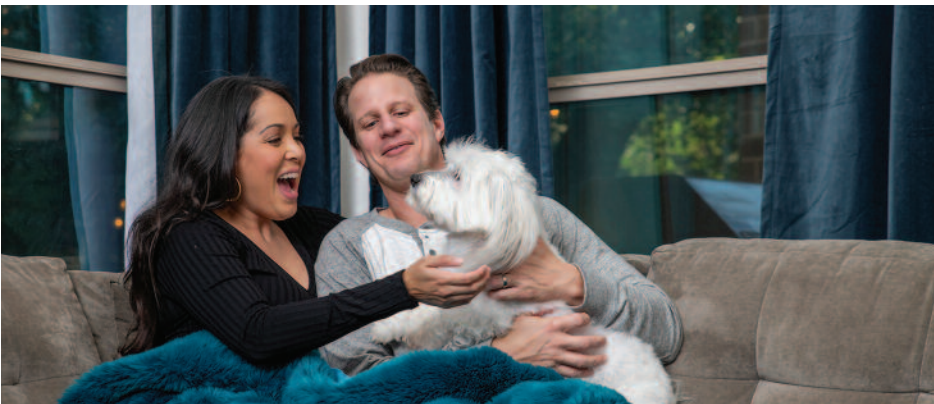
Windows are a major point of interest for most prospective homebuyers, which is why we often hear that window replacement is good for resale value. But a 2019 study by the National Association of Realtors found that on average across the U.S. installing new vinyl windows costs about \$22,000 per home but only increased resale value by \$16,500. Only 4 percent of realtors said the new windows helped close the sale, so if resale value is your main objective, the costs could likely outweigh the return on investment.

Energy Savings

Homeowners often believe that the best way to reduce energy use is to replace their windows, but this is rarely true. Companies that sell new windows sometimes advertise greater energy savings than the new windows can actually deliver. The amount of energy you save really depends on the efficiency of your existing windows compared to the efficiency of the replacement windows.

On average, according to EnergyStar, replacing single-pane windows in a 2,000 square-foot home with EnergyStar-certified windows will produce an average savings of \$125 to \$340 a year, depending on where you live. At this rate, it would take a decade or more to pay off your initial investment.

Replacing old windows can provide a number of benefits, but it's a costly endeavor. Next month we'll provide information that will help you decide what to look for in a replacement window.



Curtains can be an affordable strategy to increase comfort and reduce energy use. Photograph by Scott Van Osdol

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Calendar of Events

APRIL

NORTHEAST

April 24-26, Bargain Buyway—The Ultimate Road Trip, Northeast Nebraska. Please join us for a weekend of bargain hunting and treasure finding with a little sightseeing thrown in! Three days of fun filled shopping including garage sales, flea markets, antiques and unique treasures. Hours vary from place to place as with any garage sale or business. Towns along the route include: Ainsworth, Atkinson, Bassett, Bristow, Brunswick, Butte, Clearwater, Creighton, Emmet, Foster, Hadar, Inman, Long Pine, Lynch, Monowi, Neligh, Newport, Niobrara, O'Neill, Orchard, Pierce, Plainview, Royal, Spencer, Springview, Stuart, Verdel, Verdigre, and Winnetoon. For more information, you can call 402-583-0092 or 402-893-2880.

SOUTHEAST

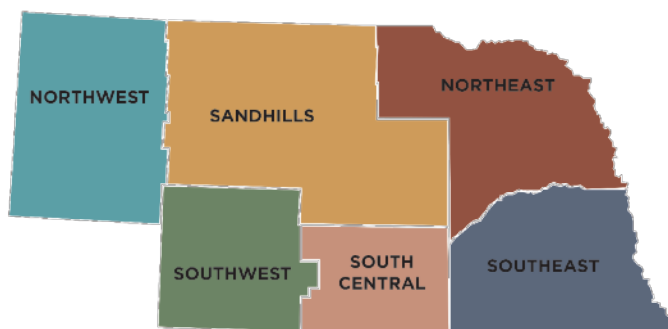
April 4, 2nd Annual Cat's Meow Spring Market, Jefferson County Fairgrounds, Fairbury, Neb. Cat's Meow Spring Market features a wide selection of shopping vendors from Southeast Nebraska.

April 24-26, 149th Annual Arbor Day Celebration, Nebraska City, Neb. Arbor Day is celebrated worldwide, but the place to be for friends of trees remains right here, in Nebraska City. Events include a parade, Fun Run, and more. <http://gonebraskacity.com/festival/arbor-day/>

SOUTHWEST

April 25, 7th Annual Taste of the Plains, 4 - 7 p.m., Ramada Sandhills Convention Center, North Platte, Neb. Tickets are \$30. A night filled with local food, wine and beer samples galore from around Western Nebraska. Activities include a silent auction, games and live music by The Platinum Pearls. For more information, visit www.midplainsunitedway.com/taste-of-the-plains

This calendar is published as a service to readers and the communities served by Nebraska's public power districts and electric cooperatives. Rural Electric Nebraskan publishes events free of charge as space allows, giving preference to free community festival and events in and around areas served by subscribing member-systems. We strive for accuracy, but please note that events, dates and times may change without notice.



To add events to Calendar, please email info to wprice@nea.org or mail your info to: Calendar, Rural Electric Nebraskan, PO Box 82048, Lincoln NE 68501. Please submit details two months before the date of the event.

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Plant more trees for a greener future

Planting trees is an investment in the future. Beyond the obvious benefits of providing shade and enhancing the natural beauty of our surroundings, trees help improve our communities and our world in an abundance of ways, including many that we may not immediately notice.

While it is often easy to see the trunk, branches and leaves of a tree, it might surprise you to learn that root zones are often two to four times the diameter of the crown. Those root systems help hold and aerate the soil, filter groundwater and allow the trees to draw in chemical nutrients which otherwise could leach into the environment.

Decaying leaves, needles and other tree debris help enrich the soil, providing nutrients for grasses, corms and other vegetation. This mélange of organic matter described by scientists as the “soil food web” includes a huge

chunk of the world’s biodiversity.

According to researchers at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, millions of species and billions of organisms, including bacteria, algae, microscopic insects, earthworms, beetles, ants, mites and fungi, can flourish in organic soil.

“The best soil on most farms is found in the fence row,” USDA officials said, citing its undisturbed properties. “It’s crumbly, dark and loose, and it’s a model of soil structure and organic matter for farmers who are trying to make their soil healthier.”

Trees take time to grow, but with proper care, after a few good seasons, a mature tree becomes a living air purifier. According to the Arbor Day Foundation, a mature tree can absorb 120 to 240 pounds of particulate pollution every year. They reduce atmospheric sulfur dioxide and hydrocarbon emissions and absorb heavy metals.

Let’s Plant More

The Arbor Day Foundation has set a goal of planting 100 million trees worldwide by 2022, the 150th anniversary of the establishment of Arbor Day. The organization hopes to enlist 5 million new tree planters, urging them to plant trees at home, participate in community tree planting projects and support reforestation programs wherever they are needed.

Trees 6 to 8 feet tall, planted around a home or building can shade windows during their first year. Within five to 10 years, they can also help shade rooflines, reducing cooling costs and energy use. Dense evergreens can serve as windbreaks, diffusing frigid breezes.

A local nursery or your county agricultural extension service can make recommendations on the best trees for your landscaping based upon growing conditions, space and design goals.

Six things you should know when planting a tree.



- 1. Call Before You Dig** - Several days before planting, call the national 811 hotline to have underground utilities located.
- 2. Handle with Care** - Always lift tree by the root ball. Keep roots moist until planting.
- 3. Digging a Proper Hole** - Dig 2 to 5 times wider than the diameter of the root ball with sloping sides to allow for proper root growth.
- 4. Planting Depth** - The trunk flare should sit slightly above ground level and the top-most roots should be buried 1 to 2 inches.
- 5. Filling the Hole** - Backfill with native soil unless it’s all clay. Tamp in soil gently to fill large air spaces.
- 6. Mulch** - Allow 1 to 2 inch clearance between the trunk and the mulch. Mulch should be 2 to 3 inches deep.

For more tree-planting tips and information, visit arborday.org.

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Bring the family together with simple recipes

Whether you're hosting a houseful of guests or simply keeping your family's hunger at bay before dinner, appetizers can be a home chef's best friend. Simple options allow for personalization while keeping cook time to a minimum.

Make your next family meal quick and tasty with a recipe that calls for common ingredients and simple preparation. These Southwest Salmon Patties are ideal for putting on the table on those busy weeknights, bringing the family together despite hectic schedules.

Or consider this Caramelized Sweet Onion Hummus recipe that's ideal for pairing with pita bread, veggies or crackers. With the layered flavor, color and texture of onions serving as a key ingredient, it's a nutritious substitute for less health-conscious appetizers and snacks.

In fact, onions can be called nature's ninja because of their many "skills." Onions add abundant flavor to a wide variety of foods with just 45 calories per serving as a source of dietary fiber, vitamin C, vitamin B6, potassium and other key nutrients such as folate, calcium and iron. They are also rich in heart-healthy nutrients and have been shown to help prevent some cancers.

Find more recipe ideas at onions-usa.org.

To watch a video of this recipe being made, scan the QR Code or visit the URL



<https://youtu.be/6zEdVu-EQCI>



Southwest Salmon Patties

- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 1 teaspoon grated lime zest
- 4 teaspoons lime juice
- 3 tablespoons fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1 1/2 cups panko breadcrumbs, divided
- 1 pound skinless, boneless salmon filets, chopped
- 4 ounces whole green chiles, drained and chopped
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil

In medium bowl, whisk mayonnaise, sour cream, lime zest, lime juice and cilantro.

In large bowl, combine salt, pepper, 3/4 cup breadcrumbs, salmon, chiles, scallions and 3 tablespoons mayonnaise mixture. Form salmon mixture into four patties. Cover patties with remaining breadcrumbs.

In skillet, heat oil. Add breaded patties and cook until golden brown, about 3 minutes on each side.

Serve with remaining mayonnaise mixture.

Find more family meal inspiration at Culinary.net.



Caramelized Sweet Onion Hummus

- 1 whole garlic head
- 4 tablespoons, plus 1 teaspoon, extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 large sweet onion, thinly sliced
- 1 can (15 ounces) chickpeas
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice (about 1/2 lemon)
- 1/2 cup tahini (toasted ground sesame seeds)
- 1 teaspoon salt

Heat oven to 350 F.

Cut top of garlic head off and place cut-side down on pan; drizzle with 1 teaspoon olive oil. Bake 20-30 minutes, or until garlic is soft. Once cool, squeeze garlic from each clove.

In large skillet over medium-high heat, cook onion in 1 tablespoon olive oil. Stir onion frequently until slices begin to brown. Reduce heat to low and continue cooking until onions are soft and reach medium brown color.

Rinse and drain chickpeas; reserve 3 tablespoons liquid.

In food processor, blend chickpeas, reserved liquid, lemon juice, tahini, garlic, salt, remaining olive oil and onions until combined and smooth. Serve with pita bread, veggies or crackers.

Recipe courtesy of the National Onion Association.

Beef Stroganoff

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 3/4 lbs. boneless round steak | 1/2 cup water |
| 2 tablespoons flour | 1 packet dried onion soup |
| 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder | 9 oz. jar sliced mushrooms, drained |
| 1/2 teaspoon pepper | 1/2 cup sour cream |
| 1/4 teaspoon paprika | 1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley |
| 10 1/4 oz. can cream of mushroom soup | |

Combine flour, garlic powder, pepper and paprika in slow cooker. Cut meat into 1 1/2 X 1/2 inch strips. Place in flour mixture and toss until meat is well coated. Add mushroom soup, water and soup mix. Stir until blended. Cover. Cook on high 3 – 3 1/2 hours or on low 6 – 7 hours. Stir in mushrooms, sour cream and parsley. Cover and cook on high 10 – 15 minutes or until heated through. Serve with rice.

Marie Belsky, Dodge, Nebraska

Favorite Deviled Eggs

- 6 hard-boiled eggs, finely chopped
- 3 strips of bacon, cooked and finely crumbled
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon prepared mustard
- 1 cup favorite cheese, shredded

In bowl combine the first seven ingredients until creamy. Shape into 1-inch balls then roll in cheese. Cover and refrigerate until serving. Yields about two dozen. With a few sprigs of parsley this makes a colorful platter for Easter. It also provides a different way to use up the leftover dyed eggs after Easter.

Vlasta Zrust, Clarkson, Nebraska

Marshmallow Krispy Bars

- 1 pkg (21 oz.) fudge brownie mix or homemade brownie recipe
- 1 pkg (10 oz.) miniature marshmallows
- 1/2 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 cup creamy peanut butter
- 1 tablespoon margarine
- 2 1/2 cups crisp rice cereal

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9" X 13" pan. Prepare and bake brownies according to package directions. Remove from oven. Sprinkle marshmallows on hot brownies. Return to oven and bake for 3 minutes longer. Place Chocolate chips, peanut butter and butter in medium saucepan. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until chips are melted. Add rice cereal; mix well. Spread mixture over marshmallow layer. Refrigerate until chilled. Cut into bars.

Wilma Schock, Norfolk, Nebraska

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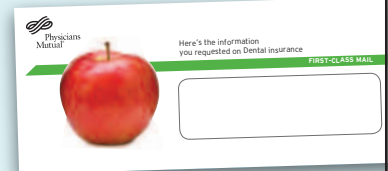
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