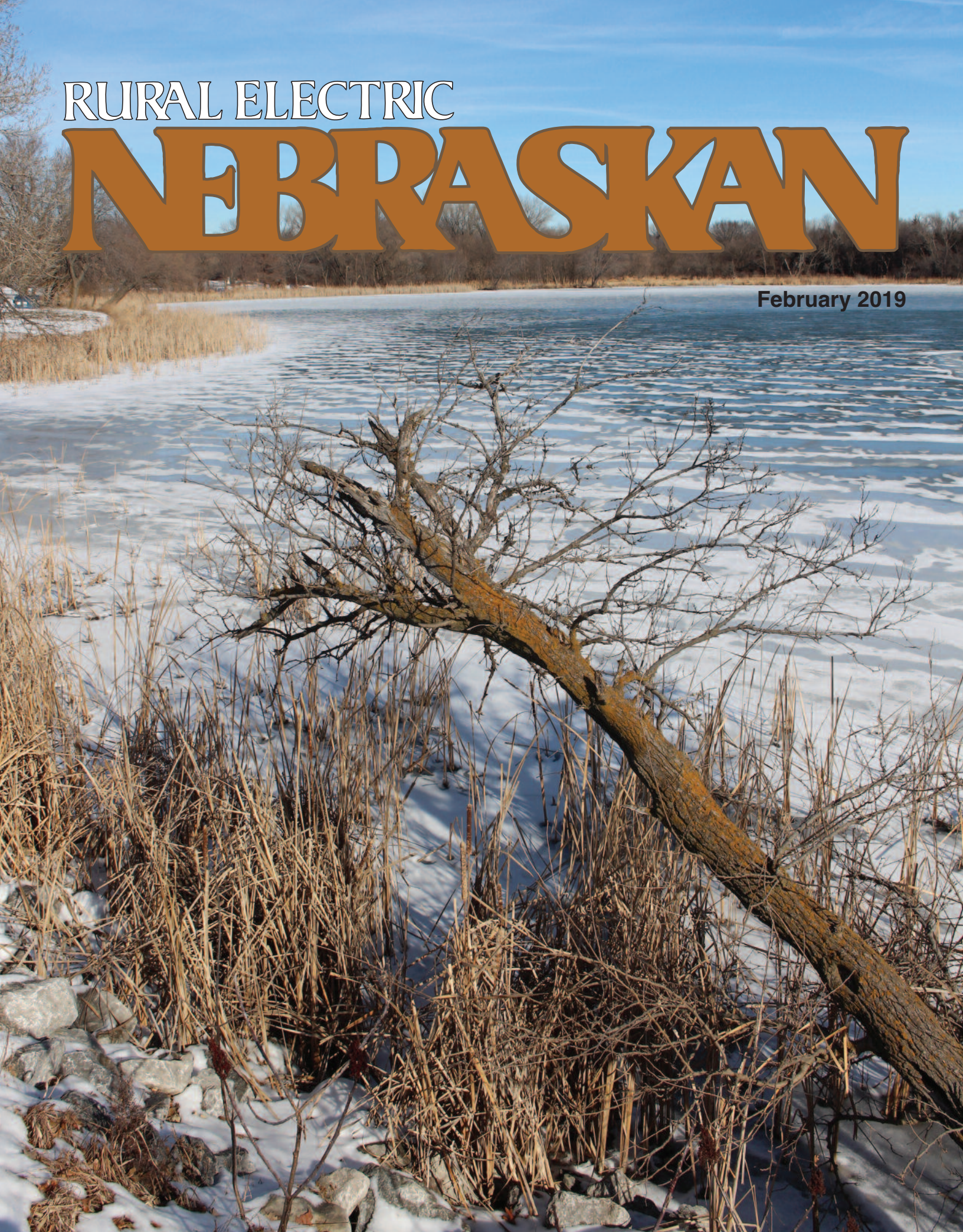


RURAL ELECTRIC

NEBRASKAN

February 2019



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RURAL ELECTRIC
NEBRASKAN

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Winter brings a chill to Pawnee State Recreation Area in Lancaster County. Photograph by Wayne Price



by Wayne Price

Don't let heating dollars escape through the cracks

Winter is a good time to see just how well your home is sealed from the cold. Pick a day when it's about 15 degrees Fahrenheit and there is a strong wind blowing outside. You might see your curtains moving with each gust of wind. Or you might notice that your neighbor's roof is covered in snow but yours has melted away. Both of these situations are usually the result of one common problem: infiltration.

Infiltration is the accidental introduction of outside air into a home, normally through cracks in the building envelope and through use of exterior doors. Another term for infiltration is air leakage. Infiltration can be caused by wind and negative pressurization of the home.

It is important to make sure your home is as energy efficient as possible. The Alliance to Save Energy offers a number of no-cost/low-cost energy efficiency tips to reduce home heating costs while maintaining comfort:

- Conduct a "draft check." Your heating dollars could be going out your windows, doors and electrical outlets. Check for air leaks throughout your home; check around doors, windows, fixtures, electrical outlets, wiring, plumbing and fireplace dampers. Turn it into a family activity. Draft-proofing is the least expensive energy efficiency investment with the biggest payoff.

- Plug those air leaks. Seal leaks between doors or windows and their frames with weather stripping and between window frames and walls with sealant or caulk.

- Install door sweeps on the insides of exterior doors. Cold air can seep in under doors. Solution: Door sweeps are cheap and keep the draft out. No sweeps available? Even a rolled up towel or blanket will help. And consider twin or dual draft guards on both sides of doors where you feel drafts.

- Open curtains and other window treatments on your west- and south-facing windows during the day to allow sunlight to naturally heat your home, and close them at night to make it harder for warm air to escape. If you are purchasing new drapes, consider an insulated lining, which reduces both heating and cooling bills.

- Freezing by your windows? If that's the case – and you've already plugged those window leaks and can't afford new high-efficiency windows – consider purchasing a kit containing sheets of plastic film to tape over the insides of your windows. Use a hair dryer to create a tight fit.

- Consider insulating drafty electrical outlets. Use light switch foam insulation pads and wall jack foam insulation pads on outlets on colder exterior walls.

- You're not in the South Seas. Don't turn up the heat so high that you can be comfortable dressed in a T-shirt and going barefoot. Even when indoors, dress for winter weather and layer clothing so that you can keep the thermostat at a reasonable yet comfortable temperature. It's a good time to wear those holiday sweaters!

- Keep furnace filters clean. Check and change your filter every month during heavy-use winter months to assist air flow, so your system doesn't have to work harder to keep you warm.

- Seal your heating and cooling ducts. In a typical house with a forced air system, about 20 percent of the air that moves through the duct system is lost due to leaks, holes and poorly connected ducts. Sealing and insulating ducts increases their efficiency, lowers home energy bills and can often pay for itself in energy savings. Insulate ducts in unheated areas such as attics, crawlspaces and garages with duct insulation that carries an R-value of 6 or higher. Also, a well-designed and sealed duct system may make it possible to downsize to a smaller, less costly heating and cooling system that will provide better dehumidification.

- Let a programmable thermostat "remember for you" to lower the heat while your home is empty and/or overnight to reduce heating costs by up to 10 percent – and allow you to come home and wake up to a toasty, comfortable house.

And you know the best thing about these tips? They will also reduce your summer cooling costs!



Follow us
@RENeditor

Reliability is an important part of public power

Some say that February is the longest month. Most of us are “over” winter by the time February rolls around. Many are tired of the cold, or the snow, or the road mess on your vehicles. If you are like me, you start looking at the seed catalogs and plan your gardens. February has the fewest days of any month but it seems longer than any other.

Imagine (or remember) how long February would be if your electric service were unreliable? How long would this last full month of winter be if you had no service?

The electric industry talks a great deal about the necessary trinity for electricity: safe, affordable and reliable electricity. That makes sense. All three of those components are important. A failure on any single component would have a huge impact on you, your family and your way of life.

Safety is always a high priority with electricity. Safe electricity is necessary. We all know that power can cause severe injury or even tragic death. Without a high measure of safety, electricity would never be usable. I cannot imagine using electricity if the threat of burning down your house was high- or if every time you flipped a light switch you got an electric shock. Our NREA members spend a great deal of time and effort to ensure your energy is provided safely to your home and business. Employees spend hours working on honing skills. NREA provides safety training to our members. There are seminars, classes and on-the-job training opportunities. This aids your rural electric provider to get the power back on after a storm as safely and quickly as possible.

We also provide consumer safety information. Simple tips like do not climb power poles and never touch a



by **Kim Christiansen**
NREA General Manager

downed power line seem intuitive- but they bear repeating. Younger citizens may not always know or understand the dangers that can come from not following basic safety around electricity. Losing a focus on safety can impact the price you pay for electricity with added downtime, legal and medical fees, and other added costs. If you want more information, review this and past issues of *Rural Electric Nebraskan* or follow NREA on Facebook.

Affordability is another key concept. Nebraska is ranked as the 5th most affordable electricity in the nation by some surveys. In September 2018, the US Energy Information Administration data indicated Nebraskans paid an average of 12.28 cents per kWh for residential service. Our fellow Americans in Alaska paid almost double, at 22.76 cents. Hawaiians paid a whopping 32.29 cents per kWh or almost triple our cost. Moreover, according to the World Atlas, our friends in Germany pay 35 cents per kWh. The Nebraska

electric industry has worked hard to keep your electric service affordable.

Perhaps the most important of the three concepts is reliability. One of my coaches once told our team it didn't matter how fast you were, or how smart you were, or how well you could do anything if you couldn't be depended on to show up and play. That's reliability, the last of the “big 3” concepts. How frustrated would you be with electric service that “flickered” on and off- even if only for a few minutes every day? How much fun would it be to watch only parts of your favorite TV programs because the electricity went on and off frequently? Imagine your fan running for only minutes an hour or your air conditioning only working at night on hot days?

Reliability has made electricity the essential tool it is today. We rely on flipping that switch. Even more, we rely on our local PPD or cooperatives to get the power back on quickly after a major snowstorm or a tornado. In 2018, US News and World Report ranked Nebraska #1 in power grid reliability. That ranking is based on the hard work and dedication your local PPD or cooperative has made to ensuring your lights come on AND stay on.

Yes, February is a long month. I plan to spend it in front of my TV, looking at gardening catalogs, basking in the glow of the lights and heat from Nebraska's high achieving, safe and reliable electric industry.

by Jason Shonerd

The Spirit of the Unicameral



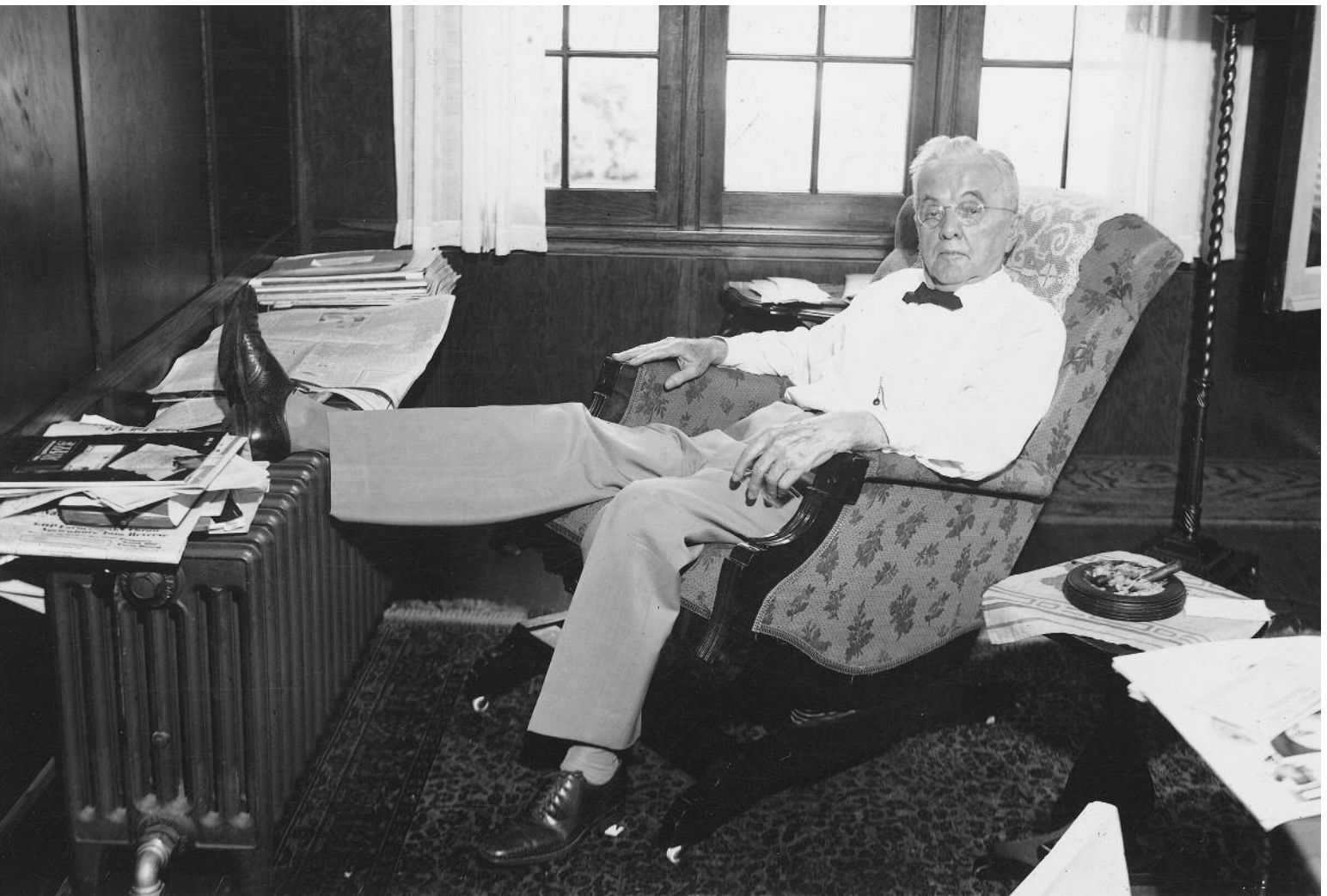
Charles Warner was elected to be the first Speaker of the House of the newly created Unicameral.

Senator George Norris was prepared to initiate an amendment to the Nebraska constitution for a unicameral government and to campaign to promote signatures for petitions to adopt the amendment independent of the Legislature, a right reserved for the people in the Nebraska Constitution. He argued that the amendment would not purge corruption from government, nor would it be a promise to be the most perfect form of government, but it would make the local government easier for the common man to follow and hold their representatives accountable.

When framing the United States Constitution in 1787, a compromise was made in an attempt to structure a constitution that would be ratified by the states united under the Articles of Confederation. The “New Jersey Plan,” as it would be called, was the proposal for a one-house Legislature in which all states would have an equal number of votes, similar to the Articles of Confederation already in use, in keeping the former colonies unified together. The plan would eventually be scrapped and compromised with our current federal government plan, a bicameral Legislature with a lower house and upper house, a House of Representatives and the Senate copied from British Parliament’s House of Commons and House of Lords at the time. After the ratification of the federal

constitution by the states, state conventions began to form their own constitutions under the new federal one, in the process duplicating the idea of a bicameral Legislature into their state constitutions.

Nebraska, like all states of the union, established its bicameral first in its territorial government, and then in 1867 when their state constitution was ratified. The push for a unicameral form of government in Nebraska was first introduced in 1913 by a state senator named John Norton from Polk. He suggested a study commission to research a fresh approach in improving the legislative body of the state. In 1915, the commission suggested there was “no need to retain a second house to represent the wealthy class or the aristocracy in a democratic state.” The Legislature declined to put the initiative in favor of a unicameral on



the ballot in 1915 and 1917 leaving the citizens of Nebraska no opportunity to voice their opinions. At the 1919-1920 constitutional convention, Norton again nudged for a one-house Legislature in Nebraska and proposed that it be included with the forty-one other amendments recommended for the state constitution. It was, however, defeated with a 43-43 tie. This would lead Norton to pursue a petition drive for a unicameral in 1923, but that failed to garner enough signatures to be put on the ballot. Coincidentally, on January 28, 1923 the New York Times published "One Branch Legislature For State Would Improve Results," a piece written by George W. Norris, U.S. Senator from Nebraska. In the article Norris advocated for a one house government to curb corruption by eliminating the conference

committee designed to amend bills between the two houses of government to pass them. Norris also proposed increased salaries for legislators claiming that, "a member of the Legislature ought to be paid a sufficient salary so that he could devote his time to the duties of his office. This would not only attract better men for the position but it would enable good men to perform better service." He also suggested the abolition of partisanship, and an elimination of corruption in legislative proceedings.

Senator George Norris, "The Gentle Knight of Progressive Ideals," was born in 1861 in Ohio, moved to Nebraska following completion of his law degree, and came to be known as the old wise sage of Nebraska during a career of forty years in the national

More on Page 8

George Norris at his home in McCook, Nebraska, ca 1938. Photographs provided by Nebraska State Historical Society

Norris's influence, the Depression and the other ballot issues summoned enough supporters for an overwhelming decision to make Nebraska's the only one-house Legislature in the country.

Nebraska Legislature From page 7

level as progressive representative in the federal government. A devout Republican when he entered the congressional arena in 1903 as the Congressman from Nebraska's Fifth District, he remembered beating the incumbent supported by both democrats and populists by a mere 181 votes out of 29,673 ballots cast. Thus began his forty-year career as a federal representative for the state of Nebraska with five consecutive terms as a Congressman and five consecutive terms as Senator. During his time in public life, always progressive minded, he gradually became distrusted by Republican party leaders for the pushing of his progressive ideals even after the Progressive Era in American politics had come to pass with a "return to normalcy" in the 1920's. Norris remained a progressive idealist, however unpopular with national politics, until they came back into fashion in the late 1920's with the stock market crash and the ensuing Great Depression, before FDR won the presidency in 1932. Norris' achievements as Senator from Nebraska include his fight to modernize the country by pushing for rural electrification, including sponsoring the Muscle Shoals Bill that authorized the damming of the Tennessee River to create federally generated power for the people. This was vetoed by President Coolidge and President Hoover but put back in place by the creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority as a part of the New Deal under FDR, making power public for the people. Norris also successfully sponsored the Twentieth Amendment to the constitution creating fresh start dates for terms to the congress, moving Congressional start terms from March 4, to January 3, and the Presidential start date from March 4, to January 20.

After publishing his article in the New York Times, Norris, ever the progressive thinker, continued to contemplate and create theories about how a one-house legislature should and ought to work. Norris' public service was during a time in which more and more power was being handed to the people. When Norris was elected to the U.S. Senate, the Seventeenth Amendment, giving the power to directly vote for Senators and cutting out state Legislature's hand in the matter, had not yet been proposed. However, Nebraska's state Legislature had adopted what was commonly called the "Oregon Plan," allowing state legislatures to put Senatorial candidates on the ballot if they so wished and voting in accordance with the people. Norris defeated his democratic opponent, and despite a democratic majority in the state Legislature, was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1912, promoting the future Seventeenth Amendment and seeing it ratified in 1913. Norris was also present in the Senate during the passing and ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment giving women the right to vote,



Senator George Norris promoted the unicameral Legislature in Nebraska, approved by voters in 1934. Photographs provided by Nebraska State Historical Society

even more power bestowed onto the people. Norris was prepared to initiate an amendment to the Nebraska constitution for a unicameral government and to campaign to promote signatures for petitions to adopt the amendment independent of the Legislature, a right reserved for the people in the Nebraska Constitution.

In 1933, with the Great Depression in full swing, an editor of a small weekly newspaper in Lincoln, Nebraska named George W. Kline began organizing a campaign in hopes of circulating petitions to put the amendment on the 1934 ballot. Kline hoped that Norris would send a letter to be read or even speak on the amendment's behalf at a banquet being held in early 1934 at the Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln. On February 22, 1934, Norris and other speakers from both major parties did indeed attend the banquet that afternoon. In his speech, Norris gave what came to be known as "The Model Legislature" speech to the 800 men and women present from every part of the state, and it was aired on two broadcast networks so that Nebraskans from all over the state could hear. Norris



Top: Norris, left, and Professor John Senning, who was an important ally of the single-house system.

Above: Nebraska Governor Charles Bryan also supported the idea of the unicameral Legislature.

concluded the speech with a showing of self-awareness that the amendment proposed would not purge corruption from government, nor would it be a promise to be the most perfect form of government, but it would make the local government easier for the common man to follow and hold their representatives accountable.

“To get good government, and to retain it, it is necessary that a liberty-loving, educated, intelligent people should be ever watchful, to carefully guard and protect their rights and liberties. The proposed amendment is not offered with the idea that it is perfect. It is not offered with the idea that it will eliminate wrong entirely, or that it will make it unnecessary for the people of the State to always keep a watchful eye upon their servants, but it will enable them to know and to find out what is wrong. It will enable them to get better laws enacted and better men into office, and to this extent it will be a guidepost along the road to human advancement and a higher civilization.”

In Nebraska’s bicameral government, if one-house

passed a bill and sent it to the other and an amendment was added and passed to the bill, it would be sent to a conference committee, which was “the greatest evil of a two-house Legislature,” according to Norris. The committee would be comprised of four or five high ranking members of both houses that would in some cases compose an entirely different bill to be sent back to the two houses for a simple yes or no vote. There were no more amendments and no more debate—just a simple yes or no. Furthermore, these committees would be off the record and would be entirely undemocratic in nature due to the leaders of the houses themselves got to decide who was to be on the committee that would be rewriting these laws. Norris crusaded against the use of the conference committee by legislators in order to shirk responsibility owed to the constituents, holding the legislators more accountable in the unicameral. During the campaign for the unicameral amendment in the fall of 1934, Norris concluded a letter to Kline favorable to the unicameral before his speaking tour stating, “the two-house Legislature enables men to shift responsibility – a one-house Legislature makes it impossible. A two-house Legislature, after it has passed the buck two or three times, and then referred to a conference committee, has, in a parliamentary manner, covered up the tracks so that nobody but an expert can tell just what has happened. In a one-house Legislature this will be impossible.”

The proposal for a unicameral government was widely opposed by Nebraska politicians, four-to-one in the house and two-to-one in the senate, as well as newspapers, led by the Omaha World Herald. The only papers to support the amendment were the Lincoln Star and the Hastings Tribune. The amendment had the support of organized labor, former State Senator, U.S. Congressman, and original supporter of the unicameral in Nebraska John Norton, former Governor Adam McMullen, current Governor Charles W. Bryan, and chairman of the political science department at the University of Nebraska Lincoln, Dr. John P. Senning. Though described by university chancellor E. A. Burnett, as being “rather liberal,” Senning advocated for the unicameral, putting his reputation and career on the line, by helping to create a citizen’s committee that drafted the amendment. Senning advised the committee with his personal library and long time studying of legislatures throughout his career.

From October 8, until the election on November 6, 1934, Norris delivered thirty-nine speeches and covered an estimated 5,000 miles in the state of Nebraska, “nearly wearing out [his] automobile.” He spoke to a conservative estimation of constituents between 20,000 and 30,000, starting in Hastings and speaking in every corner of the state from Omaha to Chadron. In every location his speech, while extemporaneous, was generally the same pattern, exposition of the amendment and the legislative

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Nebraska Legislature From page 9

procedures to his own personal arguments for the amendment to a conclusion of personal appeal. Norris relied on his humor and folksy likeable charm in his speeches in order to connect to the common man in his appeals. He was able to show Nebraskans he was still the same man who challenged his first congressional opponent to a corn husking competition to prove he was a man of the farming class and therefore a man of the people.

On November 5, 1934, Nebraskan politicians and newspaper editors went to bed confident the amendment would not pass. Once the votes were tallied, the amendment for a unicameral government in Nebraska passed, 286,086 for to 193,152 against. Eighty-five of ninety-three counties voted in a majority for the amendment, much to the surprise of politicians and newspapers across the state. While public polling has shown time and time again to not always be accurate, in 1934 a public opinion poll showed the amendment was failing with three-to-two opposition against it, when in fact it won with three-to-two in support of the amendment passing with 59.6 percent of the vote. Looking back, the years of 1933 and 1934 should have indicated a larger initiative for change amidst the Great Depression, the Dust Bowl, which was one of the most severe droughts the state had experienced, and the New Deal being pushed by FDR. Dr. Senning also observed another reason for Nebraskan discontent in 1933. He wrote that with FDR's landslide victory in the 1932 election, this caused the democratic party to win greatly across ballots across the country. This, in turn, led to a near complete transformation in the 1933 legislature, that largely comprised of "men that allowed their names on ballots with little expectation that

they would be members of the state lawmaking body." It made for a disappointing legislative session amid some of the largest crises the country had faced, being represented by inexperienced men with no promise of improvement in lawmaking in the future. The 1933 legislators fought frequently and publicly, claimed they would talk little and pass little legislation, and ended up with the longest session on record. This session set the groundwork for a collection of Nebraskans "in a resentful mood and ready to try something new."



Nebraska is currently the only state with a nonpartisan unicameral Legislature.

The 1935 legislative session now had much to tackle following the 1934 vote, including the redrawing of district lines due to the representation reduction the amendment brought with it. The Nebraska Legislature housed 133 representatives within its two houses prior to the initiation of the unicameral in 1937, the amendment passed called for only 30-50 legislators. Dr. Senning worked tirelessly, on top of his duties to the university, to redraw the new potential district lines for the new government. During negotiations, the district number was set at forty-three, arguing that a Legislature of fifty members would give great influence to the eastern third of the state giving them eighteen more members than the western third, and with fewer than forty-three members the scales again tipped in favor of the east.

The first unicameral session began January 5, 1937, presided by Norris

himself, addressing them by stating, "You have an opportunity to render a service to your fellow citizens that no other Legislature has ever had." The 1937 session held true to its principle of nonpartisanship while technically still holding a democratic majority by electing Republican Charles Warner to be their first Speaker of the House. Speaker Warner told the Lincoln Star, "We owe no allegiance to any party or to any group. Our responsibility is to the whole people of Nebraska," remaining loyal to the commitment of representing the people and not special interests. The unicameral has remained technically nonpartisan to this day, coming close to returning partisan ship to the Legislature in a bill that made it through committee and to the floor only to be stopped by a rule requiring a three-fifths majority to amend the state constitution. The original vote was only two votes short of the thirty required to add the amendment.

Now in its eightieth year, the unicameral government in Nebraska is still the only state to continue this practice and the only state with a nonpartisan Legislature. The unicameral even exceeded expectations its biggest supporter Norris had for it. "In four regular sessions of a two-house Legislature in Nebraska, coupled with one special session in 1935, a total of 3,960 bills were introduced, of which 754 passed. In four regular sessions of the unicameral Legislature, coupled with a special session in 1940, 2,703 bills were introduced, of which 794 were passed. The reduction in number of bills was 1,897- eliminating the waste of printing, the waste of time and energy of committees, and the waste of the people's money." Despite its early opposition and criticism, the unicameral in Nebraska has exceeded all expectations in making legislation in the state more efficient and more economically feasible.

Jason Shonerd is freelance writer and history buff. He lives in Lincoln, Neb.

by Kaley Lockwood



The Electric Airplane:

Landing soon in a town near you

No industry is immune from the threat of disruptive technologies. New companies are creating innovative variations of products and services that build upon previous models to offer more cost and time savings. As a result, people are flocking to these technologies simply because they improve their lives. A prime example is the electric airplane.

Zunami Aero is an aviation startup, backed by Boeing and JetBlue, who found a niche in short-haul transportation. Founded in 2013, this Washington state company expects to roll out their 12-passenger, hybrid-electric planes by the early 2020s. Just like a hybrid car, their airplane will rely on both batteries and an engine to fly. The forward-thinking company recognizes that battery energy storage is advancing quite rapidly and once it matures, the airplanes are expected to be fully electric.

The early Zunami Aero planes will be able to travel an estimated 720 miles from take-off to landing, which

is roughly a trip from Milwaukee, Wisconsin to New York, and by 2030, they're expected to reach flight distances of more than 1,000 miles. Nevertheless, the startup believes that the majority of trips will be much shorter, which will reduce fares between 40 and 80 percent.

According to their website Zunami.aero, a flight from Memphis to New Orleans would drop from \$240 to \$126. The price reduction is a result of a variety of different economic factors. As expected, the planes use less fuel, which equals cost savings. The time it takes to fuel up is also reduced which means quicker turnaround for the aircrafts. Time equals money. The smaller airports are also significantly less congested with planes and people. For the Memphis to New Orleans trip, estimated door-to-door time for a passenger would be reduced from 5 hours and 28 minutes to 2 hours and 17 minutes. Convenience and affordability are key to Zunami Aero's success.

This goal of efficient, regional

travel will shake up the airline industry when it comes to fruition. Zunami Aero poses that there are 13,500 under-utilized airports in the United States. Of these 13,500 airports, just 1 percent service roughly 96 percent of all air traffic. This means that the smaller, regional airports, built when air travel first boomed, have been largely left behind as air traffic concentrated to regional hubs like Atlanta and Dallas. The company's co-founders, Matt Knapp and Ashish Kumar, hope to leverage these smaller airports, avoid congestion of large airports and use their planes to connect communities across America. With greater mobility comes greater connection.

For more information, visit <http://zunami.aero>

Kaley Lockwood writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local public power districts and electric cooperatives.



ELECTRICAL SAFETY CHECKUP: Switches and Outlets

Are any switches or outlets warm to the touch?
→ That could indicate an unsafe wiring condition.

Are any outlets or switches discolored?
→ It could mean a dangerous heat buildup.

Do plugs fit snugly into outlets?
→ Loose-fitting plugs can cause overheating and fires.



TRI-STATE OFFERS SUMMER CONFERENCE FOR MEMBERS

TEACHERS WANTED

Michelle Pastor, education program advisor for Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, is seeking participants for the National Energy Education Development (NEED) Project.

For more information contact Michelle Pastor:

303-254-3187

mpastor@tristategt.org

The NEED Project offers a three-day summer energy conference for 4th-12th grade teachers. During this event educators receive personal development credit, STEM curriculum training and a classroom kit to keep. The conference will take place June 18-20 at Tri-State headquarters in Westminster, Colorado, and most expenses are covered. Nebraska teachers who are or who teach public power district or electric cooperative consumers in Tri-State's association can apply at www.tristate.coop/NEEDapplication.



by Derrill Holly

Small Heaters can lead to Bigger Bills

Learn why a space heater is not necessarily an economical source of long-term warmth and is not an alternative to a whole-home heating system.

During winter, for many of us, comfort at home means heat. While a good central heating system is designed to meet whole house needs, sometimes consumers turn to space heaters for additional warmth. Some people use one to boost temperatures for a single room where the available heat is inadequate, but their widespread use, over extended periods, can boost winter heating bills.

“In some cases, small space heaters can be less expensive to use if you only want to heat one room or supplement inadequate heating in one room,” according to analysts at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). “However, a space heater is not necessarily an economical source of long-term warmth. It is not an alternative to a whole-home heating system.”

Right Type for the Job

According to DOE, two types of space heaters are generally available for the residential market.

Most can deliver between 10,000 Btu and 40,000 Btu of heat per hour and commonly run on electricity, propane, natural gas or kerosene. Wood and pellet stoves are also increasingly available for many applications.

Convective heating circulates air within an enclosed space, while radiant heating transfers warming energy directly to objects or people within close proximity to its source.

If central heating is unavailable or inadequate, a convective heating unit can distribute heat relatively

The key is using space heaters in smaller rooms that are occupied infrequently, in conjunction with lower thermostat settings on your central system.

evenly throughout an enclosed space. For garages, workshops, workout rooms or laundry areas, used for a few hours a day or each week, a convective heater could be a good fit.

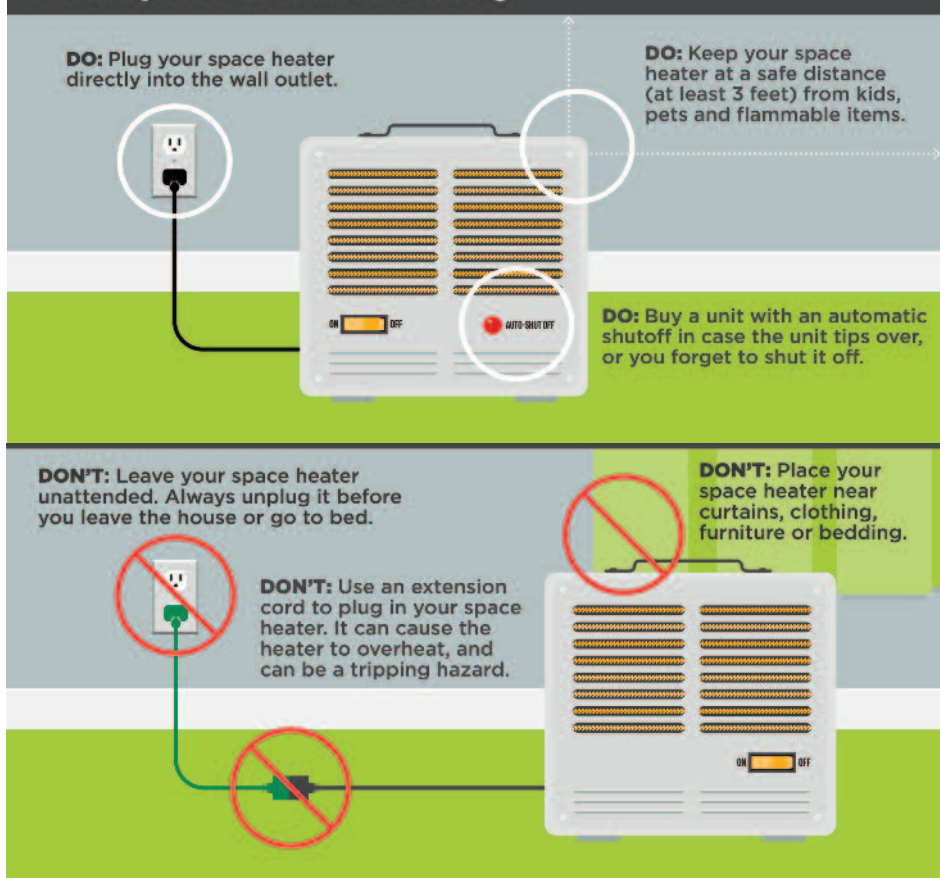
Many convective electric heaters contain some type of sealed heat transfer liquid. They allow heat generated by the devices to store energy as heat, so they cycle less while providing consistent performance.

Radiant electric heaters typically include infrared heating elements. Nearby surfaces, including people absorb the heat. Air in immediate proximity to the unit's enclosure or cabinetry also aids in the transfer of conductive warmth.

Safe Not Sorry

Space heaters get seasonal use, but they are responsible for 25,000 residential fires a year, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, which pegs the annual mortality rate at 300 a year. Burn injuries associated with surface

Use Space Heaters Safely



contacts with room heaters send about 6,000 people to emergency rooms every year, and most of those incidents don't result in fires.

Because the devices are designed to give off heat, they should always be set in locations clear of all flammable materials and out of reach of small children, pets or anyone with impaired mobility.

In recent years, many space heaters have been designed with tip-over safety features, which automatically shut off the power source in the event that the unit tilts beyond its upright position.

Because space heaters are designed specifically to produce heat, they should be plugged directly into a wall whenever possible. If an extension cord is used, it should be heavy duty, and made of 14-gauge wire or larger.

Given a choice between high, medium and low, or an adjustable thermostat, choose the latter. A unit

that heats your space to the desired temperature will cycle less, saving you energy, and never overheat the room.

And buy the right size heater for the right size space—too small and the warming results could be disappointing, too large or powerful and you'll be uncomfortable. Any time you open doors or windows to vent away warm air, you are wasting energy you've already consumed to produce heat.

Getting More for Less

"Space heaters are not the ideal solution for heating homes," said Brian Sloboda, a senior program manager for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. "For every unit of electricity that is consumed by these devices, they produce one unit of heat."

While adding several space heaters to supplement your central heating system is also likely to drive up your

energy costs, selective use can help you save money.

According to analysts at the Environmental Protection Agency, the key is using space heaters in smaller rooms that are occupied infrequently, in conjunction with lower thermostat settings on your central system.

Lowering thermostat settings from 70 to 65 degrees and using a thermostat-controlled space heater to heat 10 percent of a home's conditioned floor space will save a heat pump user \$67 a year. But the EPA cautions that space heaters are most efficient when used in small spaces for limited periods and can actually waste energy if consumers try to heat too much area with the devices.

There are currently no space heaters among the EPA's list of EnergyStar-rated products. Agency officials said they have evaluated several models but have no plans to include such products in the labeling program in the near future.

Still, high-end space heaters are heavily marketed during the autumn and winter months.

"Most of these units are very similar in design, but the cabinetry or packaging, are major selling points," said Sloboda. "Consumers should consider the wide range of heaters available, and their own taste in features and design before buying one."

An energy expert at your public power district or electric co-op can help determine if a space heater is right for your home.

"They may suggest other alternatives, like sealing air leaks, adding insulation or tuning up your heating system so it operates more efficiently," said Sloboda. "Those are just a few of the options that won't increase your overall energy use."

Derrill Holly writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local public power districts and electric cooperatives

Winter storms can bring the danger of downed power lines

Being aware of the dangers of downed power lines remains important as another season of winter storms gets underway, according to Nebraska Public Power District.

High winds, heavy snow and ice build-up can cause power lines to break or falter.

“Anytime someone sees a power line down on the ground or blowing in the wind, we encourage people to stay clear of the area and notify their local power provider immediately,” says NPPD Distribution Supervisor Ray Boston. “Broken power lines can have an electrical charge and are very dangerous if not handled by a professional. At no time should the public attempt to move a downed power line.”

Winter storms can bring a few different threats to power lines including galloping, downed, and floating wires. Galloping wires occur when high winds force two adjacent power lines to hit each other, which may cause an outage. Floating wires consist of power lines that have been broken and are blowing in the wind or are not long enough to contact the

ground.

If a powerline falls on a roadway, motorists should not try to drive over the line or move it from the roadway. This could result in serious injury. If a power line were to fall on top of a driver’s vehicle, the occupants should remain inside, call for help, and wait for a professional to deenergize the line.

“If a power line has fallen on your vehicle, and a fire, or some other emergency, is forcing you to exit the vehicle, you want to take a couple of

precautions,” added Boston, “get to the edge of your vehicle and leap as far away as possible, landing on two feet and never touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then shuffle at least 35 feet away from your vehicle. Although you may not be touching the power line directly, the ground and other objects in the area could be carrying an electric charge.”

Remember, if you see a downed power line, contact your local rural electric utility.

Downed and Dangerous

Always assume a downed power line is energized and dangerous! If you see one:

- Notify local authorities.
- Stay at least 35 ft. away.
- Never drive over a downed line, or through water touching one.
- Never try to move a downed line.

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Seven low-cost energy tips for renters

by Pat Keegan

Q : It's great to read about all the ways energy efficiency improvements to the home can save money, but what about folks like me who are renting or don't have a lot of money to spend? Are there things I can do to reduce my energy bills?

A : That's an excellent question. Not everyone can replace their furnace with an air-source heat pump, whether they're renting, or their budget won't allow it. Here are seven low-cost efficiency tips that can help you reduce your energy bills.

1. Mind the thermostat. You might be able to trim your energy bill by carefully managing the temperature in your home. The Department of Energy suggests setting your thermostat to 68 degrees F on winter days. If that's too cool, try other ways to stay warm like layering with an extra sweater. You can save more energy by turning down the thermostat even lower at night or when no one is home. The same principle works in reverse during summer months. Just set the thermostat higher to reduce your energy use for air conditioning.

2. Go programmable. If you don't always remember to adjust your thermostat manually, you could benefit from a programmable model. In the right situation, set correctly, programmable thermostats can save \$150 a year. Some programmable thermostats can be managed from your smart phone or other devices. Before you purchase one, make sure your landlord approves.

3. Try zone heating. If you don't mind less-used rooms being colder, you might be able to save energy (and money!) by zone heating.

Electric baseboards make it easy because they typically have thermostat settings on the units or



Get the most out of your hot water use by only washing full loads of dishes. Photograph provided by Pixabay.com

in each room. Portable electric space heaters can also be a good tool for zone heating if they are used safely and wisely in the area you spend the most time. Keep in mind, if you're using space heaters, you'll need to reduce the heating you're supplying to the rest of the home. Space heaters that are used incorrectly can be dangerous and increase energy costs. If your heating system needs to be replaced, you can talk to your landlord about installing a mini-split system, which is perfect for zone heating and cooling, and easier to install than a new duct and furnace system.

4. Stop air leaks. Small gaps around windows, doors, wiring and

plumbing penetrations can be major sources of energy loss. This problem can be alleviated with a little weather stripping and caulk, but you should check with your landlord before you get started. Better yet, convince the landlord to do the work! A \$10 door draft stopper (also known as a "door snake") is a simple way to block gaps underneath exterior doors. Sealing air leaks around your home could shave up to one-fifth of your heating and cooling bills.

5. Manage your windows. Your windows may be letting heat out during the winter and letting heat in during the summer. Window coverings like medium or heavy-weight curtains and thermal blinds can help. On cold winter days, window coverings can keep warmth inside and improve comfort. Opening up window coverings when you're receiving direct sunlight is a 'passive solar' technique that can help cut your heating costs. You can also cover windows with clear plastic to reduce heat loss and air leaks. During the summer, keep window coverings closed to block the sun and to keep windows from heating the cooler indoor air.

6. Look for energy wasters. There are also small steps you can take every day to reduce your energy use. Water heaters should be kept at the warm setting (120°F). Wash dishes and clothes on the most economical settings that will do the job and always wash full loads. Use the microwave instead of the oven when possible.

7. Landlords can help. Hopefully these tips will help you reduce your energy bills and increase your comfort, but consider talking to your landlord about additional ways to save, like installing better insulation, energy efficient windows or heating systems. Many landlords make these types of investments to add appeal to their rental properties, which ultimately improve the value of the property.

Good News for Americans, Bad News for Pain Drugs



Millions are expected to benefit from a new technology that could relieve years of severe joint discomfort; reprograms the body to block slow burning inflammation instead of creating it

By Casey Law, Health News Correspondent

NATION- Several of the major drug companies behind popular pain relievers may take a financial hit as manufacturing of a new pill is now complete.

Using a new technology, the pill could be safer and more effective than many store bought brands.

The pill, *VeraFlex*, was developed in May of this year by a private company in Seattle.

Functioning primarily as an immune modulator, the pill targets the body's immune system which can decrease pain in the body.

The Science Behind Relief

Research shows that the joint stiffness, soreness and discomfort associated with arthritis is caused by inflammation which attacks healthy cartilage and protective tissue.

And according to leading medical scientists, this inflammation is caused by two inflammatory enzymes released by the body's immune system.

Remarkably, the active ingredients in *VeraFlex* help to block the production of both these enzymes, resulting in a dramatic decreasing in swelling, inflammation, and discomfort.

Right now, the leading over-the-counter pills are only able to block one of these enzymes!

It's why so many sufferers fail to ever find relief.

Years of Discomfort Relieved in 5 Days

"*VeraFlex* users can generally expect more flexibility in three days...their joint pain alleviated in five days...and in just seven days, a tremendous improvement in overall joint function that may help them move like they did years prior" explains Dr. Liza Leal, developer and spokesperson for *VeraFlex*.

"It's an incredibly powerful little pill. And with the addition of a patented absorption enhancer, it packs an even greater punch. That's why I'm so excited to be the first to share these results. It's giving sufferers their life back."

A Safer, More Effective Avenue to Amazing Relief

Its widely accepted through the medical community that inflammatory enzymes are the primary cause of pain and suffering in millions of Americans. It's why most prescriptions and even nonprescription pills are designed to block them.

However, what most people don't know is that even the most advanced ones can't block both!

And yet, that's exactly what *VeraFlex* is designed to do and why it works so well.

"Top pharma companies have struggled to create a drug that blocks COX and LOX; the medical names for the two inflammatory enzymes in the body. Consider the top seller Celebrex, it only blocks one variation of the COX enzyme" explains Leal.

"And that's because they have focused on using chemicals instead of natural substances like *VeraFlex*."

"Every *VeraFlex* capsule contains an ultra-high dose of a patented plant extract which has been clinically shown to block both enzymes, bringing relief to every joint that hurts!

"The kind of relief most people have never experienced. I often say two enzymes, twice the relief. People think I'm kidding until they try it."

Piling on the Clinical Research

Remarkably, the key ingredient in *VeraFlex* is protected by 8 patents that spread from the US into Canada. And as would one guess, it's backed by an enormous amount of research, including two patient clinical trials.

In the first, 60 participants with rheumatoid arthritis and/or osteoarthritis were randomly placed into four groups.

Two groups were given the patented ingredient in *VeraFlex*, one was given the drug Celecoxib, and the last group a placebo. The results were monitored at 30, 60, and 90 days.

The data collected by researchers was stunning.

The groups taking the *VeraFlex* ingredient saw staggering improvements in arthritis symptoms such as flexibility, discomfort and function.

And even more astonishing they experienced a dramatic reduction in pain by the 30-day mark that was even better than Celecoxib, a powerful drug!

A second study was conducted to ensure the data was accurate and again the results participants experienced taking the *VeraFlex* compound blew away researchers.

This time it beat out the drug Naproxen. Shockingly, both men and women experienced a reduction in joint stiffness two days faster than when using Naproxen.

"I have to admit I was surprised when I read the initial findings" explains Leal. "But when you look at the science it just makes sense. It's

going to change everything."

Faster Delivery, Maximum Absorption

VeraFlex is mainly comprised of two patented ingredients: Univestin, a powerful immune modulator which blocks the enzymes which cause your joints to hurt and BiAloe, an absorption enhancer (accelerator) that ensures maximum potency.

Research shows that severe joint discomfort arises when the immune system goes haywire and releases COX and LOX into your blood stream, two enzymes that causes tremendous swelling and inflammation around cartilage and protective tissue.

Over time, this inflammation overwhelms the joint and it begins to deteriorate resulting in a daily battle with chronic pain.

Unfortunately, modern day pain pills are only able block only one of these enzymes, resulting in marginal relief and continued suffering.

The Univestin in *VeraFlex* is one of the only known substances which has been proven successful in blocking both enzymes, resulting in phenomenal relief from the worst kinds of discomfort.

The addition of BiAloe, a unique aloe vera extra, maximizes the delivery of the plant based Univestin extract to every joint in the body because it is proven to improve nutrient absorption for maximum results.

Aloe Vera also is proven to support the body's immune system which manages inflammation, further supporting relief.

How to Claim a Free 3-Month Supply Of VeraFlex

Due to the enormous interest consumers have shown in *VeraFlex*, the company has decided to extend their nationwide savings event for a little while longer. Here's how it works...

Call the *VeraFlex* number and speak to a live person in the US. Callers will be greeted by a knowledgeable and friendly person approved to offer up to 3 FREE bottles of *VeraFlex* with your order. *VeraFlex's* Toll-Free number is 1-800-235-7807. Only a limited discounted supply of *VeraFlex* is currently available.

Consumers who miss out on the current product inventory will have to wait until more becomes available and that could take weeks. They will also not be guaranteed any additional savings. The company advises not to wait. Call 1-800-235-7807 today.

Fight the cold with hearty comfort foods

Few things go together quite like cold weather and comfort foods. However, those hearty dishes that are typically craved on blustery days are usually not classified as “healthy.”

With the right approach, though, you can put a better-for-you twist on some of your favorite dishes that can keep you cozy and satiated during the winter season. For example, you can put a grown-up twist on grilled cheese and tomato soup with this recipe for Creamy Tomato and Roasted Pepper Soup with Cheddar Cracker Melts.

Pairing flavorful seasonal dishes like soups and stews with a wholesome snack cracker like gluten-free, Crunchmaster Tuscan Peasant Crackers can help satisfy those comfort food cravings while also contributing to a healthy lifestyle. With 20 grams of whole grains per serving, these crunchy, robust baked crackers are also cholesterol-free, allowing you to take a back-to-basics approach to your diet using simple ingredients and no artificial flavors or colors.

For other seasonal recipes, coupons, and cooking tips, visit crunchmaster.com.



Creamy Tomato and Roasted Pepper Soup

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1 pinch chili flakes
- 4 cups organic no-salt-added vegetable broth
- 1 can (28 ounces) no-salt-added diced tomatoes
- 1 cup chopped prepared roasted red peppers
- 2 bay leaves
- 1/3 cup 35 percent heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh chives, divided
- 1 teaspoon cider vinegar

Cheddar Cracker Melts:

- 24 Crunchmaster Tuscan Peasant Fire Roasted Tomato Basil Crackers
- 3/4 cup shredded cheddar cheese

In Dutch oven or large saucepan over medium heat, heat oil. Cook onion, carrot, garlic, 1/2 teaspoon salt, pepper, paprika and chili flakes about 5 minutes, or until vegetables are slightly softened.

Stir in broth, tomatoes, roasted red peppers and bay leaves; bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer 15-20 minutes, or until vegetables are tender. Discard bay leaves. Let cool slightly. Transfer to blender; puree in batches until smooth. Stir in cream, remaining salt, 1 tablespoon chives and vinegar.

To make Cheddar Cracker Melts: Heat broiler to high and position rack in center of oven. Arrange crackers on parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Sprinkle with cheese. Broil 1-2 minutes, or until cheese is melted.

Divide soup among six bowls. Sprinkle with remaining chives and serve with Cheddar Cracker Melts.



Lasagna Dip

- 3 tsp vegetable oil
- 3/4 lb lean ground beef
- 2 cups tomato sauce
- 1 cup ricotta cheese
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- 1 bag Crunchmaster Tuscan Crackers

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Heat oil in skillet set over medium-high heat; cook beef, breaking up with a spoon, for 8 to 10 minutes or until browned and cooked. Stir in tomato sauce; simmer for about 5 minutes or until slightly thickened. Transfer to 8-inch square baking dish.

Spread ricotta over beef mixture; sprinkle with mozzarella cheese. Bake for about 15 minutes or until heated through and bubbling. Sprinkle parsley over top.

Serve warm with crackers.

Sweetheart Meat Loaf

- 2 med carrots, cut into chunks
- 2 celery ribs cut into chunks
- 1 small green pepper cut into chunks
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 2 eggs
- 2 Tablespoons prepared mustard
- 2 Tablespoons ketchup
- 1 cup crushed saltine crackers (about 30)
- 2 pounds ground beef
- 1 pound ground turkey (or all beef)
- Additional ketchup

In a blender combine carrots, celery, green pepper and onion and puree. In a large bowl combine the eggs, mustard, ketchup, cracker crumbs and vegetable puree. Crumble meat over the mixture and mix well. On a greased broiler pan, pat meat mixture into a heart shape, about 1 inch thick. Cover and bake at **350 for 40 min.** Uncover and top with ketchup and bake an additional **20 min. longer.**

Kathleen Jensen, Stanton, Nebraska

Hugs “N” Kisses Cookies

- 1 package (18 oz.) refrigerated sugar cookie dough
- Red colored sugar

Cut cookie dough into 1/4 inch slices. On a floured surface, roll each slice into a 6 inch rope. Cut half of the ropes in half width-wise. Form into “X’s” on ungreased baking sheets. Seal edges and flatten slightly. Shape remaining ropes into “O’s” on ungreased baking sheets. Seal edges and flatten slightly. Sprinkle with red colored sugar. Bake at 350 degrees for 8 to 10 minutes, until edges are lightly browned. Cool for 3 minutes. Remove from baking sheets and place on wire racks to cool completely. Makes 5 dozen.

Roberta Ann Marshall, Beaver City, Nebraska

Pepperoni Pinwheels

- 1 tube refrigerated pizza crust
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1 cup chopped pepperoni
- 1/2 cup spaghetti sauce, warmed

On floured surface roll dough into a 16” X 10” rectangle. Sprinkle with cheese and pepperoni. Roll up jelly roll style, starting with long side. Cut 2 inch slices. Place cut side down on greased 15” X 10” baking sheet, lightly press down to flatten. Bake 400 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes or until golden brown. Serve with spaghetti sauce over them. Makes 10 rolls.

Arlene Miller, St. Paul, Nebraska

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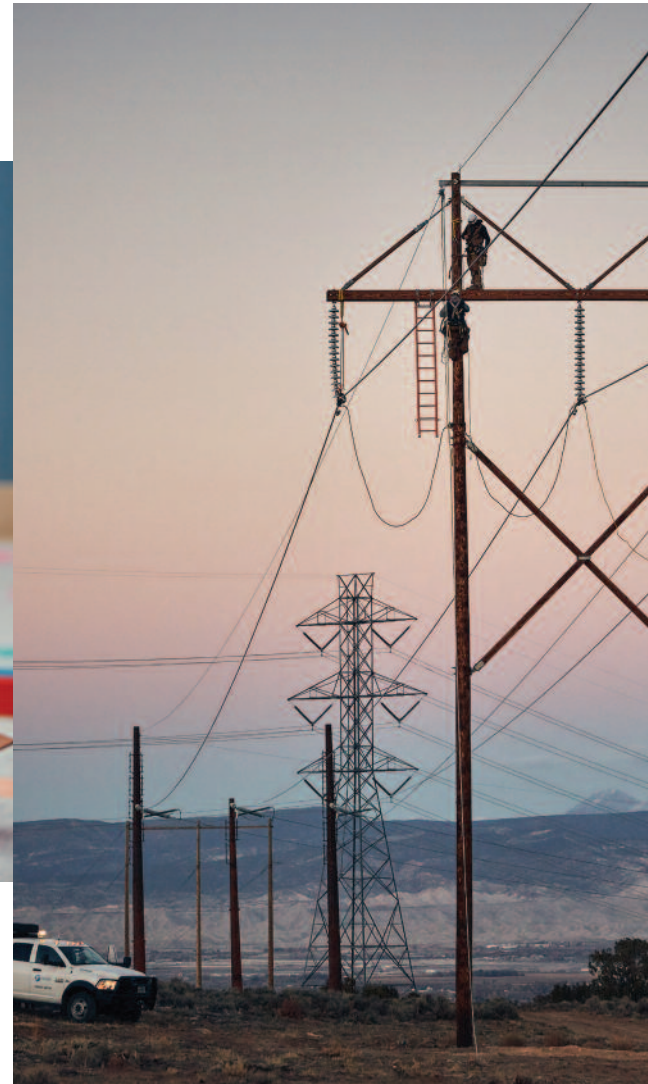
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