

# NEBRASKA

Magazine

NREA.org

January 2022

A photograph of two men in a field, one kneeling and one crouching, examining a soil sample. A probe is visible in the foreground, partially buried in the soil. The background shows a vast, flat landscape under a cloudy sky.

## Nebraska's NRDs Celebrating 50 Years of Conservation

### Inside:

• Standing Up For Public Power • How Dangerous is Knob & Tube Wiring? • Making Dollars and Sense of Energy Efficiency

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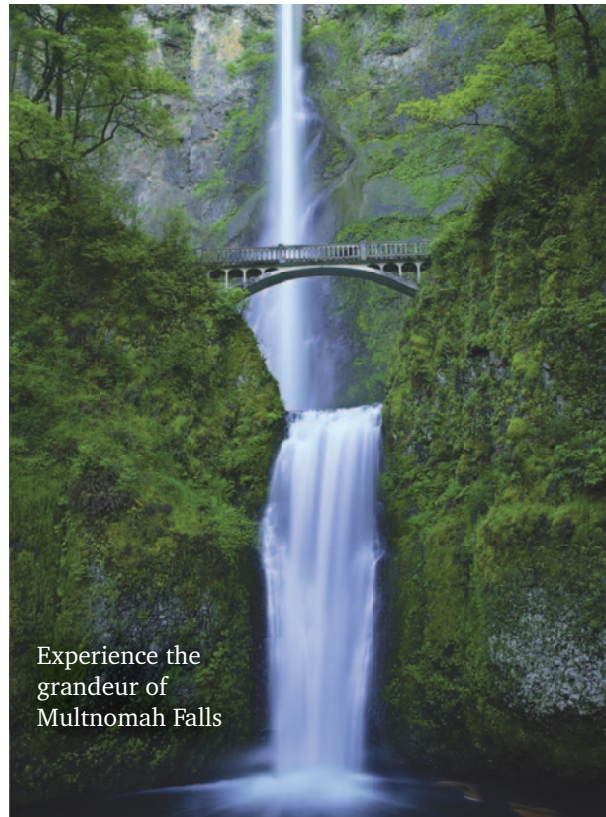


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Telling the story of  
Rural Nebraska

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Bess Streeter Aldrich, one of Nebraska's most widely read authors, wrote novels and short stories in her home in Elmwood, Neb. Her home is dedicated to preserving her writing and memorabilia by the Bess Streeter Aldrich Foundation and is open to the public for tours.

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Cover photograph by Alan J. Bartels/Lower Loup NRD



Wayne Price

## **Maintaining a Reliable Electric Supply is No Easy Task**

Nebraska's electric providers must balance the energy needs of consumers with the generation supplied

Reliable electric service is a luxury we often take for granted. Unfortunately, we may not think about how important a reliable energy supply is to us until we have to go without it, like during a severe storm. For Nebraska's public power providers, reliability has many components. Reliability is considered at every step of the electric delivery process, from the point of generation to delivery into our homes and businesses. Reliability can be impacted by the different generation resources used, by the age and maintenance of utility infrastructure, by security concerns, and by the ability to deploy a trained workforce to restore power in the event of an outage.

Reliability begins by choosing the best generation resource for our system needs. Nebraska's generation mix is a diversified portfolio of resources which include coal, nuclear, natural gas, hydroelectric, and renewable resources. Each of these generation resources provides its own positive and negative attributes which can include cost considerations, environmental impact, and the availability of that resource. In regards to reliability, not every resource is created equally. Base load resources like coal, nuclear, natural gas, or hydroelectric power can run continuously and can be actively controlled to follow load and meet consumer demand. Variable resources like wind and solar, however, rely on environmental conditions which can be hard to reliably predict. As wind speeds vary or cloud cover changes, the electric output from these generation resources can fluctuate dramatically and in an unpredictable manner. This complicates an already difficult load-balancing process. Unfortunately, most power plants were not built to be continuously ramped up and down. Unlike your light switch, they cannot be turned on and off at a moment's notice.

Nebraska's energy experts are managing the demands of a complex electric grid while responsibly increasing the use of environmentally friendly renewable energy resources and doing so with fewer outages than our neighboring states. A reliable electric supply is a result of a complex system of multiple generation resources, miles of transmission and distribution lines, a complex load monitoring system, and a dedicated workforce willing to work in extreme conditions to keep your lights on. Nebraska's rural electric member-systems are working hard to keep your lights on and we are proud of our record.





Rick Nelson

Rick Nelson is the General Manager of Custer Public Power District, headquartered in Broken Bow, Neb. He is also currently serving as the Interim General Manager of the Nebraska Rural Electric Association.

## Standing Up for Public Power

It's kind of funny how over time things kind of repeat themselves. We had a customer bring me in the Rural Electric Nebraskan from April of 1972. It was kind of fun to look back at the topics of the articles and to see what "Custer Public Power" was talking about in the insert, when I noticed an editorial page with the title of "Spirit of Nebraska."

The editor of the magazine wanted to "get up on his soap box." So I continued reading wondering what was important in 1972 that he had to get up on "his soap box."

He, Robert Anderson, editor, was having a conversation with somebody from Omaha about public power. His friend was talking about doing away with public power and the rural electric system. The argument was that public power was being subsidized by the Government and it should be sold to private companies who are more efficient. I'm sure there were more arguments than that in the conversation, but I'm going off his editorial and those were the ones mentioned.

Therefore, after hearing enough of his friend's arguments, that's when he found his soap box. Robert listed ten facts about the rural electric systems. Most of which are still applicable today. I'll just site a few. Rural electric systems cover over 75% of the land mass in the United States. By Policy, every rural power district must serve its entire rural area – everyone. The average rural residential customer now uses about 1,000 kwh's per month compared to 695 kwh's in 1972 and 357 kwh's in 1960.

As I ponder public power existence, I also have to throw into the mix that our governing boards are elected locally. We are in business to reliably serve our customer and any margins we have goes back into upkeep and building of the system to serve those customers. Not to shareholders. We are required by state statute to serve our customers reliably and at the lowest cost possible.

I feel compelled to end with the editors closing paragraph:

*"Undoubtedly, you also have run into these "types" of zealous friends. Take a tip from me – don't lose your soap box. Take it along and tell it like it is. Nebraska's rural electric systems don't need any apologies. They are the best approach yet to bringing the lowest possible priced electrical power to Nebraska's rural areas, utilizing sound business principles."* Robert Anderson, editor

I tell this story, not for the historical content, although it was fun to read, but for the significance of the content. Just like it was 50 years ago, there are people who think that public power is not efficient or stand in the way of progress. This is absolutely not the case. I say good for you Robert, back in 1972, for standing up for public power. Now you're going to see me stand up on my soap box a little more often as well.



## 50 Years of Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts

Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts celebrate 50 years in 2022. Even after a half century of protecting our state's precious water and soil, many Nebraskans are unaware of the important work done by Nebraska's NRDs.

As the home of Arbor Day, the largest congregation of cranes on Earth, more miles of river than any other state, the deepest part of the Ogallala Aquifer, the Pine Ridge, the one-of-a-kind Sandhills region – and it goes on and on – it's no wonder that Nebraskans have long been leaders in conservation. With these natural jewels and so many others in a state proudly known as one of the most agriculturally productive areas in the world, conservation of our natural resources will always be paramount.

By 1969, there were 154 special-purpose entities working statewide in the areas of soil and water conservation, and the protection of watersheds, drainages and other natural resources.

### Winds of change

On March 21, 1935, a billowing black cloud of dust formed from Midwestern topsoil churned over Washington, D.C., as legislators were opening hearings to discuss proposed soil conservation legislation. The Great Depression and Dust Bowl were raging; and farmers, ranchers and many other Americans were suffering.

Just over a month later, on April 27, 1935, Congress passed legislation to address the stark situation, stating that "the wastage of soil and moisture resources on farm, grazing, and forest lands ... is a menace to the national welfare."

As a result, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture was tasked with creation of the Soil Conservation Service. In 1949, and mostly along county lines, Nebraska became



the first state west of the Mississippi River to merge all its counties into Soil Conservation Districts – the predecessors of today's NRD system.

Water soon flowed into the mission of the Soil Conservation Districts. The agency evolved into the Soil and Water Conservation Committee in 1951, and in 1969 the name changed to the Soil and Water Conservation Commission. Three years later it morphed into the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission, before becoming part of the Department of Water Resources to form the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources.

In the late 1960s, Endicott native and University of Nebraska graduate Warren Fairchild – then the executive secretary of Nebraska's Soil and Water Commission – teamed up with Nebraska State Senator Maurice Kremer of Aurora to sketch out a plan to merge Nebraska's special-purpose entities and the nearly





*In the rolling hills and canyons of Gosper County, FFA students estimate slope during the 2021 State Land Judging competition near Smithfield. The Tri-Basin NRD, headquartered in Holdrege, hosted the event with the help of volunteers, including Information and Education staff from other Natural Resources Districts. Photograph by Alan J. Bartels/Lower Loup NRD*

organized along stream basins rather than along political boundaries – began operation on July 1, 1972.

Still, the bloc opposed to the creation of the Natural Resources Districts system was not quite finished. Court challenges questioning the constitutionality of the NRD law raged until 1974 when the Nebraska Supreme Court upheld the legislation. Nebraska's 24 NRDs, which were already hard at work, would remain to protect our resources. That number dropped to 23 when the Middle Missouri Tributaries NRD and Papio NRD merged in 1989.

### **Educating future conservationists**

Each NRD has an Information and Education department. These educators inform the public about policies; workshops, meetings and other events; and programs such as tree planting. While developing and conducting educational programs for adults is rewarding, the NRDs' I&E staff members really look forward to working with children.

Whether they are knee deep in a muddy marsh teaching elementary school kids why wildlife needs clean water just like people do, leading high school students on a plant walk through a Nebraska prairie, or helping with land judging and range judging competitions, these professionals know that the ecosystem benefits when youngsters learn about conservation early in life.

Nebraska's NRDs are partners and sponsors of the Nebraska Envirothon. The event, an environmental

500 districts they were separated into.

At about the same time, a large increase in groundwater irrigation – almost entirely due to center pivot irrigation – raised concern for the Ogallala Aquifer in residents, producers, and policy makers.

In 1969, Kremer and fellow legislator Jules Burbach of Crofton introduced LB 1357 to the Nebraska Legislature. If signed into law, the legislation would combine most of the state's conservation agencies into 24 natural resources districts. Some soil and water conservation districts joined forces, hired a lobbyist, and began organizing an opposition campaign.

The plan to oppose the bill stumbled at the Soil and Water Conservation Commission's annual meeting where it was defeated. After the Unicameral passed the NRD bill two days later, Nebraska Governor Norbert Tiemann signed Nebraska's NRDs into existence. The first Natural Resources Districts in the nation –

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## From Page 7

olympics of sorts, is the largest environmental education competition in North America. With the intention of developing future conservation leaders, participants learn about soil and land use, aquatic ecology, wildlife, environmental issues, and forestry. More than 25,000 students are tested in these areas during Envirothon competitions each year. Nebraska's teams routinely score near the top of the national rankings.

ACE Camp (Adventure Camp About the Environment) is a four-day outdoor experience that teaches students in sixth through eighth grade about aquatics, forestry, range, grassland, wildlife, soil and the land – and how to protect them. The camp is equal parts learning and fun. Exciting hands-on activities include ziplining, river float trips, games, and campfires. Nebraska's NRDs offer scholarships for the event held each June at the Nebraska State 4-H Camp near Halsey, and NRD staff lightheartedly argue amongst themselves over who will get to help with the camp.

“Conservation education helps students understand and appreciate our natural resources,” said Larry Schultz, Information and Education Coordinator for the Lower Loup NRD. “Hands-on activities enable students of all ages to realize how natural resources affect their lives and how they can be used wisely.”

Sasha Hahn, Schultz' colleague at the Tri-Basin NRD in Holdrege, echoed his sentiments.

“Our natural resources are not infinite, so educating students is critical to their future,” Hahn said. “Creating an environment for students to learn about and understand the importance of protecting these resources will help ensure that they will be around for many years to come.”



*Above: Land Judging FFA students explored the rocky geography of the Nebraska Sandhills on a brisk day last fall northwest of Valentine. The land was unfamiliar ground for the students, all from the Lower Loup NRD in Central Nebraska. The teams dozed during multi-hour van and bus rides to get to the remote location from their homes and schools hours away. The Middle Niobrara NRD in Valentine hosted the event.*

*Below: Supported by Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts, the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension, UNL's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Land Judging enables participants to learn how to recognize the physical features of the soil, determine capability of land for crop production, and evaluate management practices required for proper stewardship of the land.*

*Photographs by Alan J. Bartels/Lower Loup NRD*



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The handle is made from genuine natural bone, and features decorative wood spacers and a hand-carved motif of two overlapping feathers—a reminder for you to respect and connect with the natural world.

This fusion of substance and style can garner a high price tag out in the marketplace. In fact, we found full tang, stainless steel blades with bone handles in excess of \$2,000. Well, that won't cut it around here. We have mastered the hunt for the best deal, and in turn pass the spoils on to our customers.

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# A View of the Prairie

Visit the home where one of Nebraska's best-loved and best-selling authors lived, worked, and raised a family

by Wayne Price





The Bess Streeter Aldrich House and Museum in Elmwood, Neb. showcases the life of one of Nebraska's most widely read authors. She published 12 books and more than 160 short stories during her lifetime.

Kurk Shrader, Bess Streeter Aldrich Foundation executive director, said Aldrich considered herself a storyteller rather than a novelist, even though she had been writing stories since childhood.

"Bess won a camera at age 12 for a story and then she won \$5 and bought a parasol before she finished high school," he said. "She became a teacher and continued to write but she wasn't overly confident in her writing."

In 1911, she entered a writing contest in the *Ladies' Home Journal* under the pen name Margaret Dean Stevens, a combination of her two grandmothers' names. The contest received 2,000 entries and she finished in the top six. She received a check for \$175.



"Her publisher convinced her to start using her real name for her writing," Shrader said.

Bess and her husband, Charles, built the four bedroom, Craftsman-style house in 1922 and lived with their four children. However, in 1925 after teaching a Sunday school class, Charles had a cerebral hemorrhage and collapsed in church and died. Bess became a widow with her daughter being 16 years old and her youngest being four.

"Her comment was that she guessed her hobby was going to have to make a living," said Shrader.

She wrote nearly everything in her study in the home. She could look out her window across the prairie, which became the title of her second novel, *The Rim of the Prairie*. She would write in a Big Chief notebook in pencil and then at the end of the day local high school girls would type up her manuscript.

The museum named the upstairs bedrooms after her books, including *A Lantern in Her Hand* and *Mother Mason*. Each room contains many items and pieces of furniture that

were owned by the Aldrich family, including the small wooden desk where Bess did most of her writing. Exhibits are changed quarterly by the foundation.

In 1945 Bess sold the home to her friend, Marie Clements, and moved to Lincoln, Neb., to be near her daughter. She died in 1954 and is buried in the Elmwood Cemetery beside her husband.

The Clements family donated the house to the Bess Streeter Aldrich Foundation in 1992, noted Shrader.

The house, located at 204 East F Street in Elmwood, is open from 1-4 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, from November to April and on Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday from May to October or by appointment.

*Opposite: Photograph of Bess Streeter Aldrich courtesy of History Nebraska.*



## Nebraska 60-day Legislative Session Begins in Lincoln

As you receive your issue of *Nebraska Magazine*, the Nebraska Legislature is beginning their second session of the 107th Legislature. The sixty-day session plans to adjourn April 20th leaving senators with a short period of time to identify their legislative priorities, work through the hearing process and three stages of legislative debate, and finally get their bill signed into law by the governor.

This time of year is extremely busy for the Nebraska Rural Electric Association (NREA). In addition to the carryover bills from last year that are still eligible to make their way through the legislative process, an additional 600 bills will be introduced over the first ten days of the session. This gives us a short period of time to read and analyze the introduced bills before we meet with our board of directors and adopt our official association positions.

Already this looks to be a unique year for the Legislature. Generally, the fiscal restraints of the state's budget ensure that very few bills that carry a fiscal note (cost the state additional money) will be adopted. This year, the state's economic forecasting board is projecting that the state will bring in more than \$400 million in additional unexpected revenue. In addition, the senators will be tasked with appropriating the more than \$1 billion in federal American Rescue Plan Act dollars that the federal government has delivered to our state. This truly could be a unique opportunity for senators to think big about the future of Nebraska and put this funding towards transformational projects that could benefit the state for decades.

The NREA will not be pursuing any of our own legislation this year, but we will be looking to protect public power from those that would try to diminish our successful model. This year we are likely to see legislation that will attempt to alter the local control of public power by forcing the merger of rural power districts. Just as it would for any legislative district, creating one large rural power district would diminish access to a locally-controlled board and could create reliability issues as districts grow in size. As Nebraska loses rural representatives and our rural voice in the



Legislature, the NREA is working to develop a “Rural Partners Group.” This group will bring together rural leaders and associations from across the state, providing an opportunity for each of us to discuss our priorities and gain the support of like-minded associations. Bringing together rural representatives to discuss our goals and our legislative efforts will hopefully produce results that will collectively strengthen rural Nebraska.

As we begin to watch this year's session unfold, and as news of proposed legislation begins to be reported across the state, please keep an eye on issues that can impact electric rates and the reliability of our electric grid. An engaged citizenry is our strongest advocate. Nebraskans currently enjoy the eighth lowest residential electric rates in the nation. We have the third most reliable electric grid in the nation according to U.S. News and World Report. Yet, despite public power's success, there will most assuredly be legislation introduced that will try to alter our system in the pursuit of a new agenda. Ultimately, it is you, the consumers, that own our public power model. You are represented by your locally-elected power district board and by this Association. As these important issues come to the forefront, we look to you to engage and to be strong grassroots advocates for rural Nebraska and for low-cost and reliable electricity.

# Think Safety First When Using a Generator

Follow these generator safety tips:

- Use a properly rated extension cord to plug appliances into a generator.
- Never plug a generator into your home's electrical system.
- Place the generator at least 20 feet away from windows or doors.
- This 20-foot rule also applies to a porch or garage (or any part of the home).
- Set up and run your generator in a well-ventilated, dry area.
- If it is raining, place the generator under a stand-alone, canopy-like structure.
- Always direct exhaust away from the home or any other structure a person could enter.

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Anyone who has ever owned an older home has seen the old knob and tube wiring systems, or dealt with frayed or torn electric wires. The question is, are older wiring systems a safety hazard?

Over 41,000 home fires each year are caused by faulty electrical wiring, according to the National Fire Protection Association. The Electrical Safety Foundation also estimates that over fifty million U.S. homes don't meet current electrical code safety standards.

While these statistics are alarming, older wiring doesn't necessarily spell trouble. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) suggests the following key indicators as signs of potential problems with your electrical system:

- Lights dim, or the television picture shrinks when other appliances are turned on.
- Circuit breakers often need resetting, or fuses need frequent replacement.
- Appliances such as toasters or irons don't get as hot as they should, or take a long time to heat up.

Older electrical systems can cause other issues as well. Older homes are not often equipped with ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). GFCIs are designed to protect against electrical hazards in bathrooms and kitchens. A lack of electrical outlets can also lead to frequent use of extension cords, which is associated with



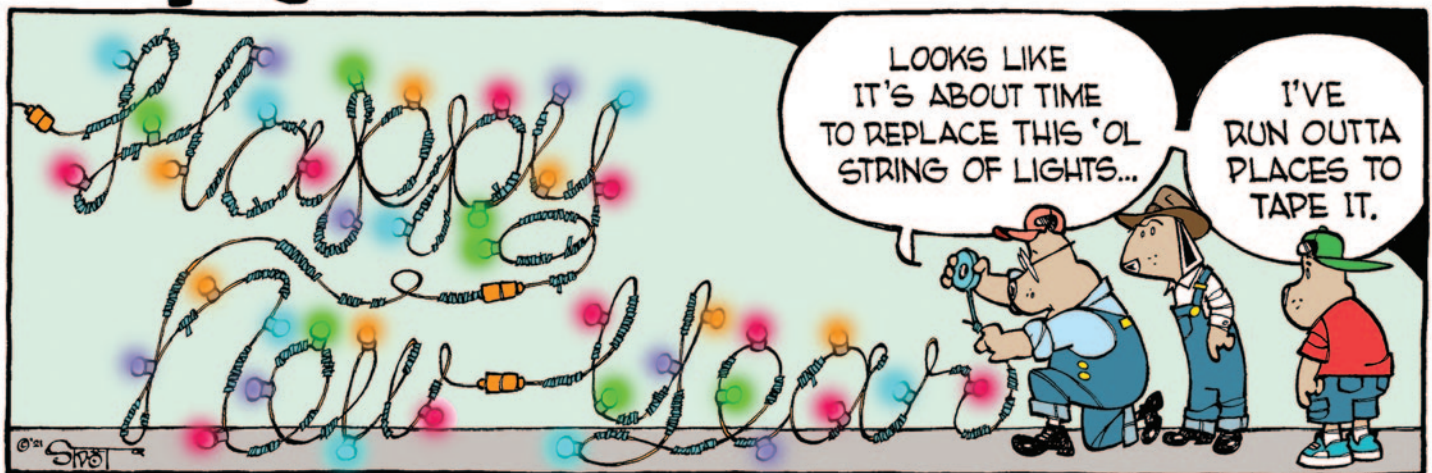
*If household insulation is installed over knob and tube wiring, a fire is just waiting to break out.*

an increase in fire hazards.

One of the main differences between modern wiring and the old knob and tube, is that there is no ground wire with knob and tube wiring. Therefore, this type of wiring cannot accommodate any electrical items with three pronged plugs, and the risk of shocks and fire is much greater.

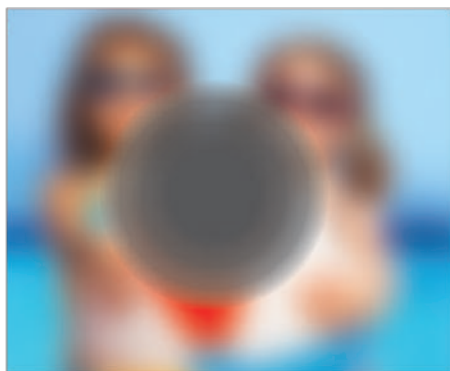
If you suspect that your home wiring is not up to code or is a safety hazard, have it inspected by a qualified electrical contractor.

## Murphy



# Advanced Technology Allows Macular Degeneration Patients To See Again

*And Allows Many Low Vision Patients To Drive Again*



*A scene as it might be viewed by a person with age-related macular degeneration*



*Same scene of Grandchildren as viewed through telescope glasses.*

For many patients with macular degeneration and other vision-related conditions, the loss of central visual detail also signals the end to one of the last bastions of independence - driving. Nebraska optometrist, Dr. Robert Stamm is using miniaturized telescopes which are mounted in glasses to help people who have lost vision from macular degeneration and other eye conditions.

“Some of my patients consider me their last chance or people who have vision loss” said Dr. Stamm, one of only a few doctors in the world who specializes in fitting bioptic

telescopes to help those who have lost vision due to macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and other eye diseases.

Imagine a pair of glasses that can improve your vision enough to change your life. Bioptic telescopes may be the breakthrough in optical technology that will give you back your independence. Patients with vision in the 20/200 range can many times be improved to 20/50.

Bioptic telescopes treat both dry and wet forms of macular degeneration as well as other vision limiting conditions.

While there is currently no cure, promising research is being done on many fronts. “My job is to figure out everything and anything possible to keep a person functioning” says Dr. Stamm “Even if it’s driving”. “The major benefit of the bioptic telescope is that the lens automatically focuses on whatever you’re looking at,” said Dr. Stamm. “It’s like a self-focusing camera, but much more precise.”

For more information and to schedule an appointment today, call:

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# Making Dollars and Sense of Energy Efficiency



*According to the U.S. Department of Energy, EnergyStar-rated appliances can save you 10% to 50% of the energy required for standard models that don't receive the EnergyStar sticker. Photograph provided by Maytag*

The term “energy efficiency” can cause confusion. Some see it as a way to a cleaner environment. Others see extra expense and inconvenience.

Sorting out those views gets even more complicated as technology gives us a dizzying array of choices for using electricity, from smart thermostats to varieties of light bulbs.

The basic idea of energy efficiency is simple—use less energy to do the same amount of work, which can save you money on your electric bills.

Here’s where it starts getting confusing. Sometimes you have to pay more for something that’s considered energy efficient. It costs more upfront but actually saves

money in the long run. That may sound illogical at first. Like the old phrase, “You have to spend money to make money.” But it makes sense after you think about it for a minute—most moneymaking projects require an initial upfront investment, whether it’s a factory or a lemonade stand.

## **Pay a little now, save a lot later.**

From computers to major appliances, manufacturers are increasing the energy efficiency of their products. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, EnergyStar-rated appliances can save you 10% to 50% of the energy required for standard models that don’t

receive the EnergyStar sticker. Considering most major appliances last 10 years, those savings can stack up over time.

There's even more savings in store by replacing older appliances that weren't built with today's efficiency standards in mind. Improvements in refrigerators are cutting their energy use in half about every 15 years. So, if your fridge is more than 20 years old, replacing it with a new high-efficiency model could save you \$300 in operating costs over the next five years.

"Smart power strips" also show how spending now on efficiency can make money in the future. Keeping your phone charger and other electronic devices plugged in can consume electricity even after they're fully charged or not in use. A smart power strip cuts off the electricity once charging is complete. A smart strip costs about \$40, and depending on your electric rates and how much charging you do, it could save as much as \$40 a year on your electric bills, recovering your initial investment almost right away.

Another example of returns on energy efficiency investments comes from the world of real estate. Realtors will be the first to tell you that energy efficiency sells houses. If you're in the market to sell, spending a little extra on insulation and efficient appliances increases resale value.

### Save \$200 a year on light bulbs.

Light bulbs offer the most dramatic story of efficiency technology improvements. By spending \$5 to \$10 on an LED bulb (compared to about \$1 for an old incandescent), you get a product that uses 75% less electricity and, incidentally, can last 20 years compared to about a year for an incandescent bulb. The Department of Energy estimates the average home could save more than \$200 a year by replacing incandescent bulbs with LEDs.

Maybe the best news of all is that as efficient products improve and gain popularity, they're not always more expensive. Many cheaper appliance models have similar annual operating costs compared with the pricier versions.

Two key tips for turning energy efficiency into dollars

are to know what you want from your energy use and to do your homework. Products come with a wide range of features that cost extra and may actually be less efficient—do you want a refrigerator that offers the best efficiency, or do you want to pay more for a less-efficient model that has an ice dispenser in the door?

And ask for help. Your local electric utility has energy experts who can tell you how to make the best use of electricity. To compare efficiency among appliances, look for the yellow Energy Guide label, which shows information like estimated annual operating costs. Explore the [energy.gov](http://energy.gov) website for online calculators and additional resources that can help you turn efficiency data into real savings on your energy bills.



*Efficiency improvements in refrigerators are cutting their energy use in half about every 15 years. If your fridge is more than 20 years old, replacing it with a new high-efficiency model could save you \$300 in operating costs over the next five years. Photograph provided by Whirlpool*



**Q** : Do energy-saving measures in my home make a big difference? What are some things I can do to save money on my electric bill?

**A** : For the average household, it depends on your home's efficiency and your habits. Your energy use is based on your home's equipment and how you use it. You might already have an efficient home and good energy use habits, or you might have room for improvement.

Energy keeps us comfortable in our homes, and our monthly bill is the associated cost for this energy use. To make energy-saving measures work in your home, it comes down to preventing energy waste while maintaining personal comfort in your home.

Let's take it back to the basics and see if we can find opportunities to save energy in your home. Filters, LEDs and thermostat settings are great places to start.

### Replace filters.

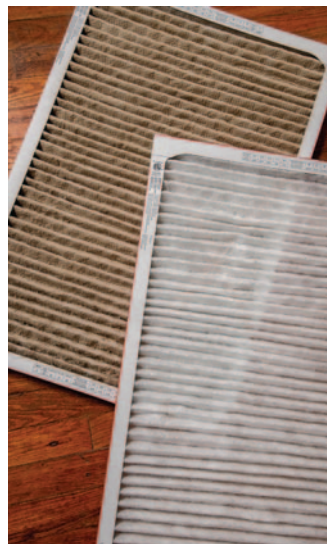
If your home has a forced-air system, you have a filter. The filter needs to be checked regularly and replaced when it's dirty. A dirty filter can cause heating and air-conditioning systems to use 15% more energy, according to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

Since heating and air conditioning make up almost half of your energy use, replacing your filter when it looks dirty is a habit that can reduce energy waste.

### Upgrade to LEDs.

Upgrading your lighting to LEDs is a simple, low-cost way to cut energy use. Depending on your budget, you can do it all at once or change bulbs out over time. If you are going to replace a few at a time, prioritize the lights you use the most.

There are many LED options available. One major variation is the color temperature, which is listed on the packaging in Kelvin. I recommend 2700K because it is similar to incandescent lighting. I also suggest EnergyStar-rated products because they meet strict quality and efficiency standards, use up to 90% less energy and last 15 times longer than standard bulbs.



### Adjust your thermostat.

It's amazing how much difference a few degrees can make. By adjusting your thermostat to your home habits, you can save year-round on heating and cooling costs.

For winter months, the DOE recommends setting your thermostat to 68 degrees when you are home and dialing it back 8 to 10 degrees when you leave the house or go to sleep. For summer, the recommendation is 78 degrees when you are home and 8 to 10 degrees warmer when you are away. Using a programmable or smart thermostat will allow you to set it according to your schedule.

Making these small changes in your routine will help improve your energy efficiency while maintaining comfort in your home.

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— J. Fitzgerald, VA



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Because each Perfect Sleep Chair is a made-to-order bedding product it cannot be returned, but if it arrives damaged or defective, at our option we will repair it or replace it. © 2021 Journey Health and Lifestyle



# Hearty, Wholesome Winter Meals for the Family

Seeking comfort from the cold in the form of a wholesome meal is a perfect way to cap off a day with loved ones. During the winter months when brisk temperatures chill you to the bone, warming up with hearty dishes at the family table can bring everyone together.

- Full of seasonal flavors with top-notch taste, Pecan-Crusted Pork Tenderloin offers a delicious main course you don't have to feel guilty about. This easy yet elegant entree puts a unique spin on a dinnertime staple thanks to a crunchy pecan crust.

- With cheddar and ricotta cheeses, sour cream and cavatappi noodles, this Mac and Cheese with Pecan Breadcrumbs is an extra creamy, creative twist on the kid-friendly classic. Pair this family favorite with the pork tenderloin for an easy weeknight combination that little ones can help with in the kitchen by stirring together the cheesy goodness.

This family dinner is made possible with tasty pecans, which are among the lowest in carbs and highest in fiber compared to other tree nuts, helping you stay fuller longer.

Visit [americanpecan.com](http://americanpecan.com) to find more winter weeknight recipe inspiration.



## Pecan-Crusted Pork Tenderloin

- 1** pork tenderloin (about 1 1/2 pounds)
- salt, to taste**
- pepper, to taste**
- 1/2** cup brown sugar, divided
- 2** tablespoons soy sauce, divided
- 2** teaspoons minced garlic
- 1/2** cup pecan pieces
- 1/4** cup pineapple juice
- 2** tablespoons Dijon mustard

Preheat oven to 400 F and lightly grease large baking dish. Season pork tenderloin with salt and pepper, to taste; set aside.

In small bowl, stir 1/4 cup brown sugar, 1 tablespoon soy sauce and minced garlic. Spread mixture over pork.

Press pecan pieces into brown sugar mixture on pork. Bake, uncovered, 20 minutes.

In medium saucepan over medium-high

heat, combine remaining brown sugar, remaining soy sauce, pineapple juice and Dijon mustard. Bring mixture to boil; reduce to simmer 3-5 minutes then remove from heat.

Slice pork, spoon sauce over top and serve.



### Mac and Cheese with Pecan Breadcrumbs

- 8 ounces cavatappi pasta
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 block (8 ounces) cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup raw pecan pieces
- 15 ounces part-skim ricotta cheese
- 4 tablespoons sour cream
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground pepper
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten

Preheat oven to 375 F.

In salted boiling water, cook pasta according to package instructions. Drain, reserving 1/2 cup pasta cooking water. Return pasta to pot and stir in butter.

Using box grater, shred cheddar cheese.

Using food processor, process 1/4 cup shredded cheese with pecans to coarse breadcrumb consistency.

Add remaining cheddar cheese, ricotta, sour cream, salt and pepper to warm pasta. Stir until thoroughly combined. Add egg; stir. Add reserved pasta water to loosen mixture; stir until smooth.

Pour into buttered 9-inch square or round casserole dish and top evenly with pecan topping.

Bake 30 minutes.

### Cheddar Ham Soup

- 2 cups potatoes, peeled diced
- 2 cups chicken broth or bullion
- 2 carrots, sliced thin
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 2 stems celery, diced
- 1 8oz pkg cream cheese
- 1/4 cup flour
- 3 cups milk
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 2 cups shredded cheddar, American or Velveta cheese
- 1 1/2 cups cubed fully cooked ham
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1 cup frozen corn

In a large saucepan combine first 5 ingredients. Bring to a boil and simmer till tender. Don't drain!

Put flour, milk, Cream cheese, seasoning and cheese in a blender and buzz till all puréed. Add to potato mixture. Add ham and vegetables and heat through. Best made the day ahead for best flavor.

**Pat Brase, Dannebrog, Nebraska**

### Pumpkin Muffins

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 cups sugar</li> <li>3 eggs</li> <li>1/2 cup vegetable oil</li> <li>1 1/3 cups pumpkin</li> <li>2 cups flour</li> <li>2 teaspoons baking soda</li> <li>2 teaspoons cinnamon</li> <li>1 teaspoon nutmeg</li> <li>1 cup raisins</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pinch salt</li> <li>2 tablespoons cold butter or margarine</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Frosting</b>  |  |
| <p><b>Streusel</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 tablespoons each sugar, flour &amp; brown sugar</li> <li>1 teaspoon cinnamon</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 4 oz cream cheese (softened to room temp)</li> <li>1/4 cup butter (softened to room temp)</li> <li>2-3 cups powder sugar</li> <li>1 tablespoon milk</li> <li>1 teaspoon vanilla</li> <li>1/2 teaspoon cinnamon</li> </ul> |

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and line two muffin tins with paper liners. Beat together sugar and eggs. Then add oil and pumpkin and mix until smooth. Add flour, soda, cinnamon and nutmeg. Stir until combined. Fold in the raisins. Streusel – Combine flour and sugars, salt and cinnamon. Stir and add in butter and mash with a fork until it resembles coarse crumbs. After filling lined muffin tins, sprinkle streusel on top of each muffin. Bake for 18 minutes or until golden brown. Frosting – Beat cream cheese and butter together until smooth and creamy. (If frosting is too runny, add more powdered sugar.) Pipe icing onto the cooled muffins. Makes 24 muffins.

**Deanne Cooper, Oshkosh, Nebraska**



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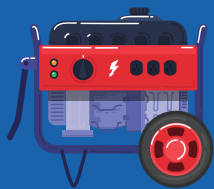
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# BE WINTER READY

As winter temperatures start to drop, work on your livestock operation goes up. Now is the time to prepare. Have a winter emergency plan in place to protect your livestock and your family in case of an unexpected power outage.

Backup generators can help protect against the unexpected and help maintain day-to-day operations.

## STAY SAFE AND FOLLOW THESE GENERATOR SAFETY TIPS:



### PORTABLE GENERATOR SAFETY

- Before starting your generator, thoroughly read and follow all the manufacturer's instructions.
- NEVER plug a generator directly into a power outlet. This can electrocute you and the utility workers attempting to restore power.
- Only operate the generator outdoors, in dry areas, and at least 30 feet away from buildings and any openings.
- Be aware of carbon monoxide poisoning symptoms.



### PERMANENT GENERATOR SAFETY

- Installation requires a licensed electrical contractor, must follow local codes, and be inspected.
- Generators not correctly installed can backfeed the power lines and pose a threat of electrical shock to the utility workers attempting to restore power
- Notify your local electric utility about your backup system. This allows crews to be alert for possible generators in service if they work to restore power in your area.



Scan for more winter safety tips.

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