

# NEBRASKA

June 2025

Magazine

## Move Over

to Protect  
Roadside Crews

Stay Safe on  
Two Wheels

Electrified Danger  
Zones

Efficiency Tips for  
New Homes



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Published monthly by the Nebraska Rural Electric Association, 1244 K Street, Box 82048, Lincoln, Nebraska 68501, (402) 475-4988.

Advertising in the *Nebraska Magazine* does not imply endorsement for products by the Nebraska Rural Electric Association. Correspondence should be sent to Wayne Price, Editor, *Nebraska Magazine*, Box 82048, Lincoln, NE 68501.

The *Nebraska Magazine* is printed by the Aradius Group, 4700 F Street, Omaha, NE 68117. Form 3579 should be sent to *Nebraska Magazine*, Box 82048, Lincoln, NE 68501.

Periodicals postage paid at Lincoln, Neb. POSTMASTER: send address changes to *Nebraska Magazine*, 1244 K Street, Box 82048, Lincoln, NE 68501.

Publication numbers are USPS 071-630 and ISSN 0193-4937.

Subscriber Services: Cost of subscription for consumers of participating member-systems is \$2.14 per year (17.8 cents per month), plus periodicals postage paid from equity accruing to the consumer. For nonmembers, a subscription is \$10 per year or \$20 for three years, plus local and state tax. Single copy, \$2.50.

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*A crew from Southern Public Power District rebuilds a distribution line along a rural road. Photograph by John Gits, Southern PPD Journeyman Lineman*



# Editor's Page



Wayne Price

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[nebraskamagazine.org](http://nebraskamagazine.org)



## Locally Owned, Locally Powered

Did you know that Nebraska is the only state in the union where our electricity is provided entirely from either a publicly-owned utility or a member-owned electric cooperative? This means that 100 percent of the power you use at your home or business is provided by a public power district (PPD) or an electric cooperative.

In 1936, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, sitting beside Nebraska's own Senator George Norris, signed into law the Rural Electrification Act. At that time, only seven percent of Nebraska's farms had access to electrical service due primarily to the fact that investor-owned utilities (IOUs) saw no profit in bringing electricity to rural areas. The leadership that it took to establish Nebraska's rural electric utilities still exists today. The decisions governing your not-for-profit public power district or electric cooperative are made just as they were more than 89 years ago; by member-owners and locally elected board members.

In Nebraska, whether your power is delivered by a PPD or electric cooperative, you have the right to decide who represents you on your utility's board of directors. If you have a question or concern, as a cooperative member or PPD customer, you have the ability to attend a regularly scheduled board meeting and speak with your utility's decision-makers. No issue is too big or too small. If it's important to you, your local board takes your issue seriously.

Try doing that at an investor-owned utility. As a customer of an IOU, there is no convenient or regular access to the decision-makers of that utility. Unlike Nebraska's public power utilities and cooperatives, investor-owned utilities are driven primarily by profitability for the utility. An IOU board of directors convenes privately and behind closed doors. They are elected by the company's shareholders, not its customers or member-owners. Business decisions are based on what is best for the IOU's bottom line and what will maximize profits and dividends to shareholders, and not necessarily what is best for that utility's customers. In short, investor-owned utilities operate and are governed very differently than how the public power district and electric cooperatives that delivers reliable and affordable electricity to your home and business is governed.

Local control of your public power district or electric cooperative also means that they know you well, have your needs and best interests in mind, and they have deep roots in your community. It is members of your family, or your friends, and most certainly your neighbors that work for and operate your electric utility. NREA's rural electric member-systems deliver service to over 286,551 meters over 96,000 plus miles of distribution lines and employ more than 1,100 individuals across some of our state's most rural areas. Members of your utility's board of directors are customers just like you. They have a stake in every decision that your utility makes and they take a sincere interest in the local economy and welfare of the community they serve.

The bottom line is this: In Nebraska you are an important owner of Nebraska's all-public power utility model and through local control, you have a strong voice on electricity-related issues. The same cannot be said if your power did not come from a public power district or electric cooperative.





Colyn Suda

Colyn Suda is the  
General Manager of  
Southwest Public  
Power District  
headquartered in  
Palisade, Neb.

## Every Job Begins With Safety First

Every hour of every day, safety is the primary focus of employees in the electric industry. All facets of getting the electric product from that piece of coal, uranium or any other fuel source is carefully planned in order to be delivered to the end-use customer safely. From our perspective at the distribution level, we spend countless hours making this a priority.

Our team meets weekly reviewing upcoming jobs. In addition, tailgates are performed prior to each specific job. These tailgates are when each crew meets and discusses the job and the plan ahead of time. Everything from the materials needed, equipment used, and individual responsibilities are planned. Preparations are made including “worse case” scenarios, exact job location and nearest emergency responders are known and discussed with each crew member.

Being very specific and detail oriented is important to building a safety culture wherever you work. But for our industry, it needs to go further. This culture of safety needs to reach our customers and all citizens who might live, work or commute near our facilities. Electric utilities budget and spend a lot of money trying to educate the public about not only the safety hazards, but also what should be done in the event of an electrical accident event.

We use all sources of communication to send these messages. Newspaper, radio, television, social media, home and ranch shows, and even this very magazine you’re reading. Regardless of these efforts, it is inevitable that accidents will continue to occur. But as I’ve learned in the practices at Southwest Public Power District, most of these accidents are entirely preventable and typically occur during a time of fatigue or simply being rushed. Many accidents in Nebraska also seem to be seasonal and coincide with planting or harvesting periods.

In 2024, Southwest Public Power District alone responded to 21 outage calls as a result of customer accidents with farming equipment coming into contact with poles, wires or other electrical facilities. Thankfully no one was seriously injured last year, but repair costs and damaged equipment exceeded \$93,000 being passed on to the customer.

According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International 74% of workplace electrical fatalities occurred in non-electrical occupations from 2011-2023. Almost 43% of those were due to direct contact with overhead power lines.

Many accidents could be avoided by simply following three short steps.

- 1) Slow down and think about your work plan every day.
- 2) Report low hanging lines or damaged electrical equipment immediately.

**Continued on Page 17**



*Electric utilities serving rural and remote areas often have power lines along twisty and hilly roads. Locals accustomed to driving those roads at fairly high speeds may be startled and have little time to react when they encounter a work crew past a hill or around a curve.*

*Photograph by Jerry Mosemak, NRECA*



by Scott Flood

# Move Over

## to Protect Roadside Crews



When lineworkers are perched in a bucket truck, repairing power lines along a busy road, they have good reason to be concerned about their safety. However, most are less apprehensive about problems like working with high voltages or falling. Their biggest worry is also the most unpredictable: a distracted driver slamming into their vehicle or a nearby power pole.

The National Safety Council reported that 891 people were killed and 37,701 people were injured in work zone crashes during 2022 (the most recent statistics). Most of those crashes occur in construction sites, which are usually well-marked. Public power districts and electric cooperative crews are likely to face even greater danger, as they are often working alone along remote stretches of roads, frequently in heavy rain or other adverse weather conditions that can reduce their visibility.

The danger of work zone crashes led every state to adopt “move over” laws that require drivers to lower their speed and switch lanes when possible to protect emergency vehicles. The goal is to provide an added safety buffer and minimize the potential for accidents. Drivers caught violating the laws can face penalties such as significant fines.

Nebraska law requires drivers to slow down and move into another lane that is at least one moving lane apart from the stopped vehicle, and be prepared to stop. This includes any stopped vehicle operated by a towing or vehicle recovery service, a Nebraska State Patrol motorist assistance vehicle, a publicly or privately owned utility maintenance vehicle, a highway maintenance vehicle, or a vehicle operated by a solid waste or recycling collection service, which is stopped and displaying strobe or flashing red, yellow, or amber lights, shall, unless otherwise directed by a law enforcement officer.

Compounding this issue is the dramatic increase in distracted driving. The National Transportation Highway Safety Administration has reported that as many as 1,000 Americans are injured each day because of activities that take drivers’ attention away from the

road. The most common is reading and responding to text messages. If a driver traveling at 55 miles per hour glances at their phone for just five seconds, they’ll have traveled the length of a football field before returning their gaze to the road.

The design of today’s vehicles contributes to distraction. Many vehicles have complex controls for entertainment and climate that demand the driver take their eyes off the road to make even simple adjustments.

Geography can also be a factor. Electric utilities serving rural and remote areas often have power lines along twisty and hilly roads. Locals accustomed to driving those roads at fairly high speeds may be startled and have little time to react when they encounter a work crew past a hill or around a curve.

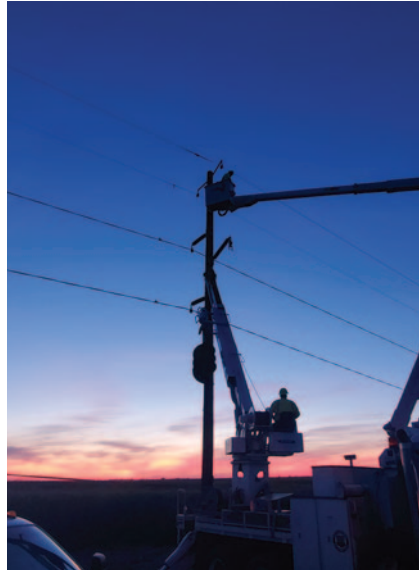
Besides the potential for lineworker injuries, accidents can also damage or destroy expensive service vehicles, reducing a utility’s ability to respond to outages and other problems. Power poles and other infrastructure may also suffer severe damage.

Additionally, many of the tasks performed by lineworkers, such as reconnecting high-voltage power lines, are inherently dangerous and

require their complete focus. When their attention is distracted by speeding or noisy vehicles, they’re more likely to make mistakes that can complicate the repair or cause injury.

Nor are rural electric utility employees at risk only when their vehicles are parked and repairs are underway. Lineworkers frequently have to drive slowly along the shoulder of roads to pinpoint broken power lines or failed transformers, especially in darkness or conditions that interfere with visibility.

Many state transportation agencies have work zone awareness programs. Amplifying those efforts by devoting part of a utility’s advertising, publicity and social media reminds rural electric utility consumers and other drivers of the importance of giving lineworkers a wide berth.



*Above: Lineworkers frequently have to drive slowly along the shoulder of roads to pinpoint broken power lines or failed transformers, especially in darkness. Photograph by Robert Leake*





# Manage your energy costs and save money at home

**Look for the Energy Star label, the government's symbol of energy efficiency, on a wide range of consumer products to save up to 30 percent on related electricity bills.**

When it comes to energy efficiency in your home or business, experts often refer to the “building envelope” as a place to start for energy saving opportunities. In simple terms, the building envelope includes physical components that separate indoors from outdoors. These usually include exterior walls, foundations, roofs, windows and doors.

Improving building envelope efficiency is generally a low-cost, high-return method for increasing a home's efficient use of energy. When an owner incorporates these improvements as the structure is being built, small additional costs provide energy savings that pay for themselves year after year.

But what if your existing home is one of the 83.5 percent of homes in rural Nebraska that are more than 20 years old? There are still excellent efficiency opportunities you can incorporate that will save you money for years to come!

Starting with least expensive improvements, tighten your place up. Air leaks or infiltration cause some of the biggest heat losses in older structures and can account for almost 30 percent of total heat lost. Check for cracks and gaps around all penetrations through

insulated floors, exterior walls and ceilings. These can be caused by things such as utility lines, exhaust pipes, air conditioning line sets and plumbing. Look along the sill plate and band joist at the top of your foundation walls. Even examine fireplace dampers, attic access hatches and light fixtures in insulated ceilings.

How you seal these air leaks depends on their size and where gaps are. Caulk works best for cracks less than a quarter-inch wide. When purchasing caulks make sure they are recommended for the surface you are sealing. For larger cracks and gaps, expanding foam sealant is better as long as gaps and holes are protected from sunlight and moisture.

Then it is time to insulate. The typical home loses over 45 percent of its heat through external walls, roof and floor. Unfortunately, installing insulation into existing buildings can be difficult in many areas. In a much older home, if you are not sure if the walls are insulated, you might be able to tell by removing an outlet cover and looking into the wall cavity. Otherwise, find a closet (or cabinet) along an exterior wall and drill two quarter-inch holes, one above the other, in the wall about four inches apart.





**Seal air leaks and properly insulate to save up to 20 percent on heating and cooling bills, while also increasing home comfort.**

Shine a flashlight into one hole while looking into the other. If you can see your light, the wall is probably not insulated. If this is so, the best option is to bring in an insulation contractor to blow cellulose or fiberglass into the walls.

Adding insulation to an unheated attic can be much easier. If there is no floor in the attic, simply add more loose fill or unfaced fiberglass batt insulation. If you have a floor in the attic, you may need to remove the floor before adding insulation. In Nebraska, you should have 12 to 15 inches of evenly covering insulation to maximize cost-effectiveness.

While windows are often the first thing many people think about to save energy, they are usually the most expensive upgrade. They rarely pay back their cost quickly enough to be a good investment based on energy savings alone. If your existing windows are in fairly good shape, it will be more cost-effective to improve their efficiency with weather stripping and caulk. But if your existing windows only have single panes, have rotted or damaged wood, cracked glass, poorly fitting sashes or locks that do not work, you may be better off replacing them. Finally, if other reasons, such as comfort, appearance or cleaning convenience, justify replacing your windows, it is highly recommended to invest the small added cost in highly efficient windows rather than minimum-performance ones.

Wood is still the most common construction material for windows, and it insulates fairly well. Aluminum has been used extensively, but unless their design incorporates a thermal break, simple aluminum frames are very inefficient because aluminum easily conducts heat. Vinyl windows have become popular and some vinyl frames are insulated using fiberglass to reduce heat transfer better than wood.

As with many consumer products, always look for the EnergyStar label to ensure you are purchasing an approved level of quality and efficiency. The best windows today insulate almost four times better than best available windows from fifteen years ago. When selecting, compare warranties against the loss of the air seal. Also, remember that it is crazy to spend thousands of dollars on new windows only to have an amateur contractor install them. High-performance windows cannot achieve their efficiency ratings if they are installed improperly with gaps and air leaks around the frame.

To find more ways to manage energy costs, visit with your local electric utility. They are committed to helping customers make the most from the energy they use to keep their homes and businesses warm in the winter and cool in the summer. They may also offer energy efficiency financial incentives to offset the cost of making your home or business more energy efficient.





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# Tough Budget Year Closes with Wins for Public Power

by James Dukesherer, NREA Director of Government Relations

This year's 90-day legislative session has come to an end. Budget years are always difficult as the senators have to find a way to balance the unlimited wants of the state with a constitutional requirement to balance the budget. Cutting programs and increasing taxes in time of a budget shortfall, like this year, requires some difficult decisions. Ultimately, senators have to find 33 votes to agree to cease debate and adopt a balanced budget.

The Legislature has now adjourned for the year, and this month we can take a look back at the results and accomplishments of this year's session. As the government relations director for the Nebraska Rural Electric Association, it is my job to work to protect our public power model and the affordable and reliable electric service our members provide to the citizens of Nebraska. Our association, and more importantly our members, work hard to ensure that Nebraska continues to stand out as one of the best states to live and work in when it comes to the electric service our customers enjoy. As we worked towards these goals, here is a brief summary of some of the most pressing issues impacting the electric industry that we faced in this year's legislative session.

## Industry Legislation that Passed

**LB 20 (J Cavanaugh)** Allows agricultural self-generation facilities to generate electricity on the customer side of the electric meter as long as these generation facilities do not feed back electricity onto the electric grid. These self-generating consumers will continue to be subject to electric rates that ensure they pay for their fair share of the electric grid.—NREA Supported

**LB 43 (DeKay)** Updates a statute adopted in 2024 dealing with electric infrastructure built near certain

military installations. The bill clarifies which materials are regulated and provides a reasonable process for certifying compliance with the statute to the Nebraska Power Review Board.—NREA Supported

**LB 91 (DeKay)** Unified two contradictory statutes relating to the conveyance of the electric distribution systems by a public power utility back to a city. In the event that a town turns over ownership of their electric utility infrastructure to a public power district and then later requests back ownership, LB 91 unifies the statutes and clarifies the process.—Introduced on behalf of the NREA

**LB 105 (Hughes)** Allows public power districts to draft their board members voting district outlines to match their service territories, ensuring only those that are served by a power district are able to vote for and serve on that board of directors.—Introduced on behalf of the NREA

**LB396 (DeKay)** Allows public power districts to no longer file their budgets with the Power Review Board. Since public power districts are subject to the public records and open meetings laws, filing these documents with the Power Review Board was a redundant and unnecessary task.—NREA Supported

## Other Bills of Note that Passed

**LB526 (Jacobson)** Applies to cryptocurrency mining operations. The bill requires cryptocurrency mining operations that have one megawatt and greater electric demand to allow electric utilities to place them on an interruptible rate. Doing so ensures that the utility can shut down their electric service to these operations during peak times when generation is maxed out.

**LB644 and LB 660 (Bostar and Andersen)** both bills contain language prohibiting the purchase of drones that



*State Senator Barry DeKay meets with public power district managers in the Capitol rotunda.*

are manufactured by foreign adversaries. These bills require the impacted power districts to purchase only those drones that are deemed secure.

As always, the NREA would like to thank all of you that follow this column during the legislative session. An active and engaged membership is the best way to protect our state's all public-power system. Your grassroots support throughout the legislative session has ensured our success. The NREA does not often ask for legislation to be considered and passed by the Legislature. The fact that we were able to get two bills across the finish line this year (LB 91 and LB 105) was a great success. We thank the bill sponsors, the Natural Resources Committee, and all of the senators that supported these measures. We also thank you, our readers, for your attention to the issues that impact our industry and for your continued support of public power.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Take advantage of the warmer weather to reduce home energy use. Avoid using your oven and use a grill instead. Not only will cooking outdoors eliminate the energy used to power the oven or stove, but it will also avoid raising the temperature inside your home, reducing the need for additional air conditioning.

You can also avoid using the oven with tasty no-bake recipes. Get creative in the kitchen and explore new ways to save energy!

Source: *energy.gov*

**Whatever your reason,  
choose Unleaded 88.**

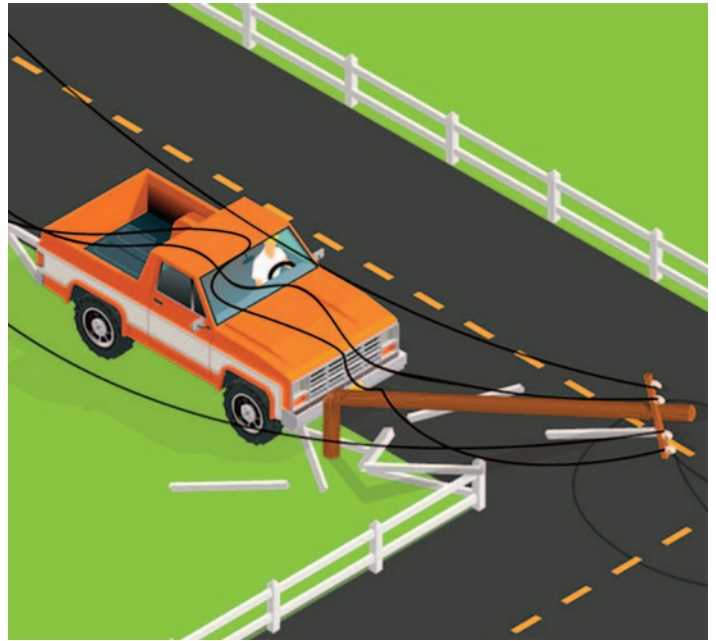
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# Electrified Danger Zones



## Know The Emergency Move That Could Save Your Life

Severe weather in Nebraska brings many threats, including the danger of downed power lines. Consumers need to be cautious of any downed power lines they see, especially following severe storms. Strong straight-line winds and tornadoes can cause power lines and poles to break or can cause other objects such as tree branches to blow into power lines, knocking them down.

“Getting too close to a power line, or trying to move a downed power line, could result in a serious or even fatal injury,” notes Nebraska Public Power District Operations Program Manager Trevor Roth. “If you see a power line hanging from a pole or lying on the ground, stay away from the area. You can contact your local power provider to notify them of the damage, so that they can respond and safely fix the line. Our crews are prepared and ready to respond to outages when severe weather hits.”

If a power line were to fall on top of a vehicle you are in, stay inside the vehicle and call an emergency number for help. If a fire or other issue forces you to leave the vehicle, jump away from the vehicle and land on both feet. Never touching the vehicle and ground at the same time. Then shuffle away from the area keeping both feet on the ground.

Other storm safety tips include:

- Always assume downed lines are live. Never touch a

downed power line or anything in contact with it. Even lines that appear harmless could be energized and deadly.

- Keep your distance. Stay at least 35 feet away from downed lines — about the length of a school bus — and encourage others to do the same.

- Never enter a flooded basement if electrical outlets are submerged. The water could be energized. Do not turn power off, if you must stand in water to do so. Call your electric utility and have them turn off power at the meter.

- Storm debris, standing water, and tree branches may be energized if they are touching a live wire. Avoid walking or driving over them.

- After storms, inspect your surroundings carefully before beginning any clean-up. If there's any doubt about the safety of an area, wait for professionals to clear it.

- Provide any and all lineworkers as much room as you can. If they are working to restore electricity in the area, please avoid the area if possible. The technicians need space and the least amount of distractions as possible when working to restore electricity.

- Before entering storm-damaged buildings, make sure electricity and gas are turned off.

Visit [www.nppd.com/outages/outage-safety-tips](http://www.nppd.com/outages/outage-safety-tips) for a complete list of tips.

# WHAT TO DO: IF YOUR CAR CRASHES INTO A UTILITY POLE

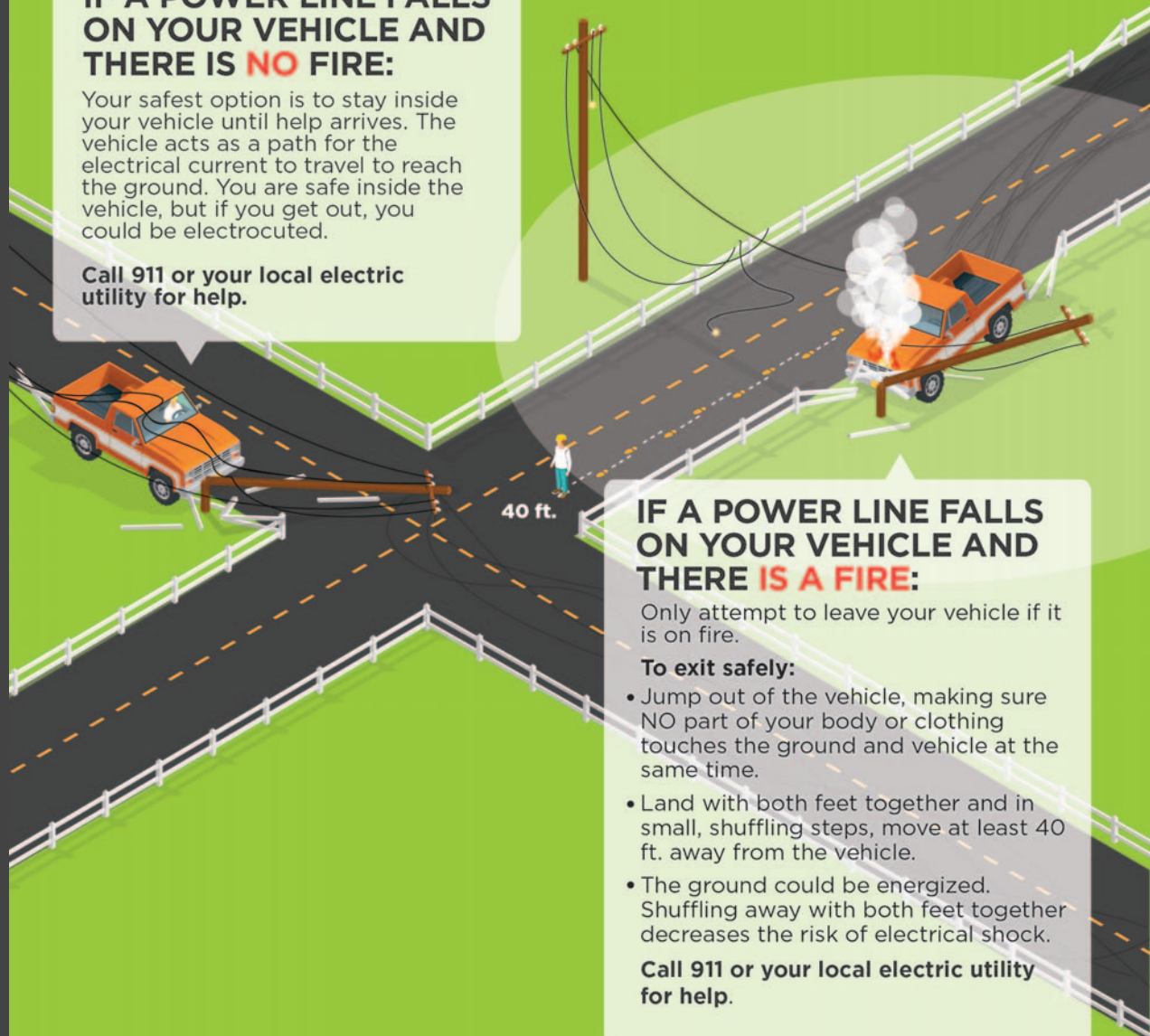
**Accidents happen.** Would you know what to do if your car crashed into an electric utility pole? Knowing what to do could be the difference between life and death.

**Always consider power lines and other electrical equipment to be live and dangerous!**

## IF A POWER LINE FALLS ON YOUR VEHICLE AND THERE IS **NO** FIRE:

Your safest option is to stay inside your vehicle until help arrives. The vehicle acts as a path for the electrical current to travel to reach the ground. You are safe inside the vehicle, but if you get out, you could be electrocuted.

**Call 911 or your local electric utility for help.**



## IF A POWER LINE FALLS ON YOUR VEHICLE AND THERE **IS A FIRE**:

Only attempt to leave your vehicle if it is on fire.

### **To exit safely:**

- Jump out of the vehicle, making sure NO part of your body or clothing touches the ground and vehicle at the same time.
- Land with both feet together and in small, shuffling steps, move at least 40 ft. away from the vehicle.
- The ground could be energized. Shuffling away with both feet together decreases the risk of electrical shock.

**Call 911 or your local electric utility for help.**



Bicycling offers a healthy and eco-friendly mode of transportation, but safety should always be a top priority. As a safety expert with 25 years of experience, I emphasize the importance of adhering to state laws and best practices to ensure a secure riding experience.



In Nebraska, bicyclists are required to follow the same traffic laws as motorists. This includes obeying traffic signals, riding in the same direction as traffic, and using hand signals when turning. While there is no state law mandating helmet use, wearing one is strongly recommended for protection. Additionally, Nebraska law mandates that bicycles operated at night must be equipped with a white front light visible from at least 500 feet and a red rear reflector visible from 300 feet.

There are two main types of crashes: the most common (falls), and the most serious (the ones with cars). Regardless of the reason for the crash, prevention is the name of the game. There are things you can do to decrease your risk of a crash. First, know some of the latest bicycle safety facts:

- Bicyclist deaths are highest during the summer months between June and September.

- Nearly three quarters of all bicyclist deaths occur in urban areas.

- Failing to yield the right of way is the highest factor in fatal bike crashes, followed by bicyclists not being visible.

Maintaining a predictable path and being alert to your

surroundings are crucial. Avoid sudden swerves, and always signal your intentions to other road users. Be cautious of parked cars to prevent “dooring” incidents, and stay vigilant at intersections and driveways where visibility might be limited.

Wearing bright or reflective clothing enhances visibility, especially during dawn, dusk, or inclement weather. Even during daylight hours, it's beneficial to use lights and reflectors to increase your presence on the road.

Be aware that some Nebraska cities have specific ordinances. For instance, in Lincoln, riding bicycles on certain sidewalks is prohibited, and cyclists must ride single file on roadways. Always check local regulations before heading out.

By understanding and adhering to these guidelines, cyclists can enjoy a safer riding experience.

## Murphy



## From Page 5

3) Tailgate with your team members about potential hazards before every job.

I would extend a personal invitation to anyone reading this to contact us for more information about our monthly safety meetings or daily tailgates for a better understanding of the preparation and communication required to make your work, your employees and your family a safety priority.

In addition, I would be willing to bet that your local utility would be excited to visit your communities, schools and local organized events to share this message of safety and planning. All it takes is a call.

## Larry's Safety Lesson

### Stay Safe from Heat Stress on the Job

By **Larry Oetken**



When working outdoors, especially in hot weather, heat stress can become a serious hazard.

Preventing it is not only possible—it's essential for protecting your health and safety.

Hydration is your first line of defense. Drink water every 15 minutes, even if you're not thirsty. Once you feel thirst, you may already be on the path to heat exhaustion. Frequent breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas also help your body cool down and recover.

Plan your workday wisely. Try to schedule the most physically demanding tasks during the cooler parts of the day, such as early morning or late afternoon. Dress for the heat by wearing lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing. Don't forget sunscreen, a wide-brimmed hat, and sunglasses to protect against the sun's rays.

Just as important: know the signs of heat stress—confusion, dizziness, nausea, excessive sweating—and watch out for yourself and your coworkers.

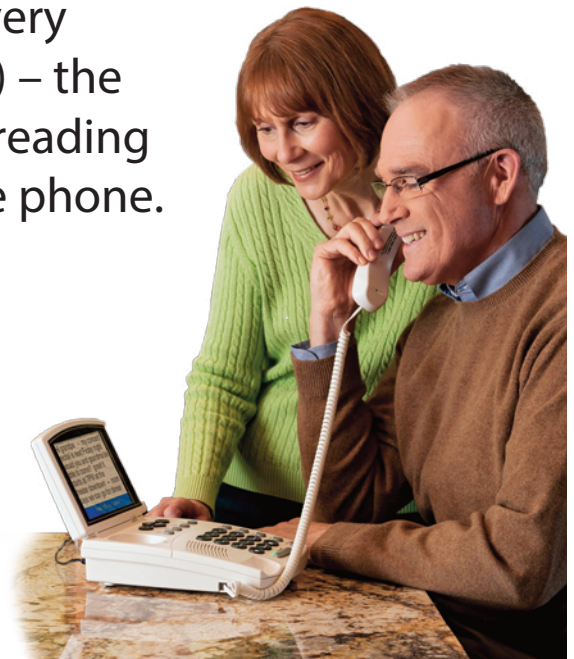
Larry Oetken is the Director Job Training & Safety for the Nebraska Rural Electric Association.

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Prioritizing energy efficiency when building a new home can create future savings and make living more comfortable. It might cost a little more upfront but will pay off in the long run.

Let's explore two approaches: Following an energy efficiency certification plan or adding energy efficient designs and equipment to your construction project.

There are several efficiency certifications available for new-construction homes that may qualify for discounted homeowner's insurance, tax credits and other incentives.

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification ensures the home uses less energy while prioritizing sustainable resources and healthy indoor air quality. LEED-certified homes use 20% to 30% less energy than the average home—with some homes saving up to 60%—and can cost the same as non-LEED homes with proper planning, according to the U.S. Green Building Council.

Passive House certification requires the home to be so efficient it needs little to no heating and cooling equipment while remaining comfortable for its occupants. To achieve up to 90% less energy use than the average home, the certification focuses on maximizing the efficiency of the building envelope—all components that separate the indoors from the outdoors—including proper insulation levels, air sealing and high-efficiency windows.

ENERGY STAR NextGen Certification for New Homes recognizes houses that are 20% more efficient than the average home and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% to 80%.

Although various certifications are available, you don't have to follow a set guide. Consider adding these energy efficiency principles to your new home build.

Advanced framing techniques maximize the amount of insulated area and save on material costs in wood-framed homes. This technique can save up to \$500 for a 1,200-square-foot home and \$1,000 for a 2,400-square-foot home on material costs, between 3% to 5% on labor costs and up to 5% on annual heating and cooling costs, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.



*Consider framing techniques, insulation levels, and heating and cooling equipment to maximize your new home's energy efficiency. Photograph by Mark Gilliland, Pioneer Utility Resources*

Choose a contractor who is familiar with these techniques, and check with your local building officials to ensure compliance with local codes.

The importance of a home's orientation is often overlooked. According to the International Association of Certified Home Inspectors, homes oriented to the path of the sun use less energy for heating and cooling to reduce energy bills and improve comfort.

If you are building or buying a new home that doesn't allow options for orientation or framing, you might be able to request higher insulation levels in the attic. Increasing the insulation levels likely won't cost much more for materials and labor, but it can help you use less energy and save money in the long run.

Heating and cooling equipment should be properly sized using energy modeling tools that calculate the home's heating and cooling needs. Investing in a more efficient building envelope that is well insulated and air sealed can reduce the home's heating and cooling load, making it possible to have a smaller, less expensive heating and cooling system. This saves money on equipment costs and lowers energy use.

Optimizing the efficiency of a new home requires a whole-house approach. Analyze all systems and how they work together to ensure maximum efficiency for a safe and comfortable home.

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5 Sided Star Privy Mark

## A World's First Creates The Lowest Mintage Silver Eagle...Ever!

The American Silver Eagle is arguably the most popular coin on the planet. First struck in 1986 for US citizens to own physical silver bullion, the Silver Eagle is made from one ounce of 99.9% fine silver. It's no wonder why these hefty silver dollars have become THE global standard for silver bullion coins, with over 640,000,000 coins minted to date.

And now, the US Mint has released a special Silver Eagle that might just become THE greatest of all time...the *Star Privy Silver Eagle*!

### What's So Special?

There are two "key" reasons why the Star Privy Silver Eagle is poised to become the most sought-after coin in the Silver Eagle series;

**One**, collectors LOVE "Firsts" and the Star Privy is the First-Ever bullion Silver Eagle to have a Privy Mark, cementing its permanent place in Silver Eagle history.

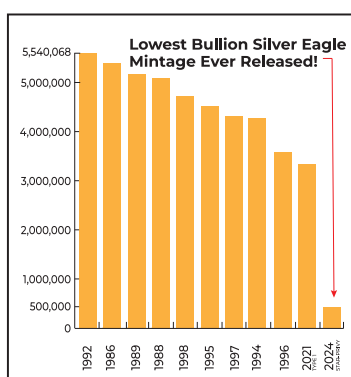
**Two**, collectors also GO CRAZY for low mintage coins, the lower the better. And the Star Privy Silver Eagle not only has a low mintage. It's the lowest mintage bullion Silver Eagle EVER!

### First-Ever Privy-Marked Bullion Silver Eagle

Privy marks are small symbols added to coin, oftentimes to commemorate special occasions and/or historic events. In this case, the US Mint has added a "star" to the Silver Eagle to celebrate the release of a new mobile gaming app, 8th Era, a groundbreaking new mobile gaming app that marries gaming with coin collecting to inspire the next generation of collectors. It's an instant "must-have" for Silver Eagle collectors.

### Lowest Mintage Bullion Silver Eagle EVER

Not only is the Star Privy Silver Eagle the first ever privy-marked bullion Silver Eagle, it's also the lowest mintage bullion Silver Eagle ever! How low? It's not even close!



Consider this....the 1996 Silver Eagle is the lowest mintage with 3,603,386 coins made. The Star Privy Silver Eagle has a mintage of only 500,000 coins. That's SEVEN TIMES LOWER. Just look at the graph for perspective.

### The First 50,000 Coins Released

Each coin comes certified in Gem Brilliant Uncirculated condition, coming from the first 50,000 coins issued, the "top 10%" if you will, certified by the leading independent 3rd party grading company NGC. Those are bragging rights every collector would dream of having!

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# HOMETOWN EATS

## PARK PLACE RESTAURANT LEIGH, NEB.

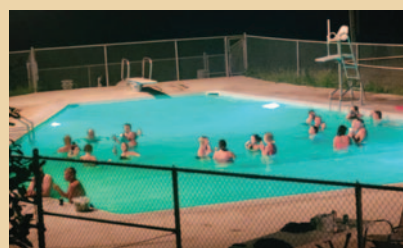
Park Place in Leigh, Neb. is more than a restaurant—it's a cornerstone of community life. Once known as the Tri County Country Club, this local gathering spot has undergone more than a name change since its founding in 1969. Today, under the care of Jim Magsamen and Heather Knerr, Park Place blends small-town charm and delicious food.

Originally dubbed Centennial Park Place for its proximity to the city park, baseball field, and swimming pool, the restaurant has evolved into a place where locals and visitors find comfort. Since taking over the business, Jim and Heather have cultivated a warm, down-to-earth atmosphere with the help of eight employees, including a full-time cook whose homemade fare keeps guests coming back for more.

And make no mistake: people come for the food. Wednesdays are wing night, and it's not uncommon for regulars to plan their week around it, especially during the recreational baseball and softball leagues season. The Prime Rib sandwich has earned local legend status, while the Chicken Fried Steak is a nostalgic nod to Grandma Nadine's kitchen—breaded and pan-fried the old-fashioned way, no shortcuts, no deep fryers.

But Park Place is more than just a place to grab a delicious bite. Throughout the year, it buzzes with special events. From a celebratory Mother's Day Brunch to a lively New Year's Eve bash and a Memorial Day barbecue buffet, there's always something happening. They also open their doors for birthday parties and other gatherings, and the occasional karaoke night.

Adding to its charm is a brand-new deck that overlooks the adjacent baseball field, where the crack of the bat and cheers of the crowd provide a lively backdrop during summer evenings. Leigh's



annual Men's fast pitch softball tournament in July, the longest running in the state, brings teams from across Nebraska.

While Jim's primary focus is his nearby business, J&L Automotive, he's a familiar face at the restaurant in the evenings, supporting Heather, who dedicates her time to Park Place. Open nightly from 5 p.m. until 2 a.m., Park Place, powered reliably by Cornhusker Public Power District, stands as a testament to community spirit and the simple pleasure of good food and good company.



## Skillet Lasagna

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 44 ounces marinara sauce
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1/2 cup ricotta
- 1 1/2 cups frozen spinach
- 9 lasagna noodles
- 1 cup mozzarella cheese
- bread, for serving
- Parmesan cheese, for topping (optional)

In large skillet or Dutch oven, brown ground beef with onion powder, garlic powder and salt and pepper, to taste. Drain excess grease. Mix in marinara sauce, heavy whipping cream, ricotta and spinach.

Break up lasagna noodles and add to skillet. Cover and let set over medium heat 10 minutes. Stir and top with mozzarella cheese. Cover and let set 10 minutes.

Serve with bread and top with Parmesan cheese, if desired.

*Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"*

## Reader Submitted Recipes

### Halupsi (Cabbage Rolls)

- |                               |                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 2 lbs. ground beef or venison | 2 teaspoons paprika    |
| 2-3 garlic cloves             | 1 large cabbage, cored |
| 1/2 cup carrots, minced       | 2 cans tomato soup     |
| 2 cups rice                   | Heavy cream            |
| Salt and pepper to taste      |                        |

Fill large pot three quarters full with water and bring to a boil. In a large bowl combine meat, onion, garlic, carrots, rice and spices. Mix well. Place cabbage in boiling water. As leaves soften and pull away, remove with tongs and place onto cookie sheets. You may use a sharp knife to carefully trim down the thickest veins on the cabbage leaves. Fill each leaf with meat mixture, wrapping the leaf around it and tucking in the sides. Place vein side down in 9 x 13-inch baking dish and repeat, packing the Halupsi bundles snugly against each other. Place in oven for 1 hour at 350° or until tops are brown. In a medium bowl combine soup with cream. Pour over Halupsi and place in oven for an additional 30-45 minutes or until a crust begins to form over top.

**Alan Bartels, Farwell, Nebraska**

### Springtime Potato Salad

- |                                       |                         |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 6 cups diced, peeled, cooked potatoes | 1/2 cup mayonnaise      |
| 4 hard-cooked eggs, chopped           | 3 tablespoons sugar     |
| 1/2 cup chopped celery                | 1 tablespoon vinegar    |
| 1/3 cup chopped onion                 | 1 tablespoon milk       |
| 1/3 cup chopped radish                | 1 1/2 teaspoons mustard |
|                                       | 1/2 teaspoon salt       |
|                                       | Paprika                 |

In a bowl combine potatoes, eggs, celery, onion, and radish. In another bowl combine mayonnaise, sugar, vinegar, milk, mustard, and salt. Mix well. Pour over potato mixture, stirring to coat. Cover and refrigerate. Sprinkle with paprika before serving.

**Delores Hansen, Stanton, Nebraska**

### Fizzy Orange Pineapple Punch

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1 can (46 oz) pineapple juice, chilled | juice concentrate, thawed      |
| 1 can (14 oz) sweetened condensed milk | 1 bottle (2 liters) ginger ale |
| 1 can (6 oz) frozen orange             | 6 - 8 scoops orange sherbet    |
|  | Orange slices, for garnish     |
|  | Mint leaves, for garnish       |

In large bowl, combine pineapple juice, condensed milk, and orange juice concentrate. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Before serving, add ginger ale, and top with scoops of sherbet, orange slices and mint.

**Donna Hanson, Oakdale, Nebraska**





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