

# NEBRASKA

Magazine

NREA.org

February 2023



## WONDERFUL WINTER TRAILS

at Nebraska State Parks

### Inside:

- Get Moving For Better Health • Easy Ways to Control Water Use in the Home
- Use Space Heaters Safely

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## 14 Wonderful Winter Trails at Nebraska State Parks

Get outdoors this winter and enjoy the invigorating fresh air of a winter's day on a state park trail. Discover these trails offering wildlife viewing, shelter from the wind, and beautiful scenic views to appreciate. Bring a friend and take in the unique beauty of Nebraska.

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*Angie Messerer and Brooke Talbott of Lincoln cross-country ski on a winter trail. Photograph by Eric Fowler, courtesy of NEBRASKAland Magazine, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.*



Wayne Price

## Keep Pets and Energy Bills Comfortable

I recently noticed our family cat, Penelope, curled up in a blanket on the couch. If she could talk, I have a feeling she would echo my wife and suggest that we turn up the thermostat a couple degrees.

This month, I'd like to share a few simple ways you can make your home more comfortable this winter, which can ultimately help you save on energy bills.

As we head into the cold weather season here in Nebraska, it's a good idea to replace the HVAC filter for better air quality and to help the unit operate more efficiently. You can also keep your home cozier by caulking and weatherstripping windows and doors. If your home is particularly chilly, you can tape or affix heavy, clear plastic to the inside of your window frames to create an additional barrier against the cold. Ensure that the plastic is tightly sealed to the frame to help reduce infiltration.



We know winter can be “ruff”, so we set our thermostat at 68 degrees, a “purr-fect” temperature for people and pets. This is especially important for smaller, short hair and senior dogs—not just for warmth, but for their general health. Puppies, kittens and older pets with arthritis or other ailments may have a harder time controlling their body heat and need the additional warmth when it's chilly out.

Pets that sleep close to the floor can be subject to cold drafts that enter your home through windows and exterior doors. If your pet's bed is near a window or door that feels drafty, tightly roll up a towel and place it near the bottom of the door or window to eliminate the draft. Cutting down on cold drafts helps everyone feel more comfortable during colder months.

Try to elevate your pet's bed so it's not placed directly on a cold floor. An old chair or sofa cushion works well. If you don't use a dog bed, take some old blankets and create a donut shape on the cushion so the dog can snuggle and “nest” within the blanket. You can do the same for cats but on a smaller scale. Blankets enable pets to nestle into them, even when they aren't tired, and provide a comfortable place for dogs and cats to curl up.

During the day, open your blinds and curtains to allow sunlight to warm your home. Close window coverings at night for an added layer of insulation.

We can't control the weather, but we can provide advice to help you save energy and keep your family and furry friends more comfortable during the winter season.

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# Get moving for better health



*Photograph courtesy of Pixabay.com*

The average American spends between six and nine hours each workday sitting at a desk, sometimes without a break. Add online and in-person meetings, lunch at his or her desk and time in the car to get to work, and that figure grows to 10 or more hours. Once at home, the sedentary lifestyle continues with dinner, watching television and surfing the web, bringing nonactive hours closer to 12 to 14.

“People are moving less and sitting more,” says Terry Browning, president and CEO of MOSSA, a provider of group fitness workouts and movement programs to health clubs and to individuals through MOSSA On Demand. “In the past three decades, statistics show that people have become less active, more overweight and are less healthy than ever before.

“The term ‘sitting disease’ is now being used by the scientific community to refer to the metabolic

syndrome and ill effects associated with an overly sedentary lifestyle,” he says. “All this sitting has created a generation of people with back and hip issues, joint stiffness and muscle soreness. We would say their movement health is really suffering, and this results in the country spending billions in medical costs annually to keep people well.”

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends that adults do at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity each week.

“The reality is that for most people, this number seems unattainable,” he says. “However, this amount of activity can be a reality if people start slowly and build up their movement and activity levels over time.”

Getting active doesn’t mean going out on Day 1 and running a marathon. In fact, activity can be as simple as

parking the car farther from the grocery store or getting off the bus one stop earlier. Walk around the neighborhood or a nearby park. Or instead of fast-forwarding through commercials when you're watching television, get up and walk around your house.

"For most people, any type of movement can help," he says. "From standing up and stretching for five minutes every 45 minutes to walking around while you're on the telephone, you can help prevent your muscles and joints from becoming too stiff and even safely increase your heart rate to get your blood flowing."

Individualize your movement routine. Some people prefer group activities while others do better with one or two friends or on their own.

"Consider joining a gym, health club or YMCA and taking a group fitness workout a couple of times a week," Browning says. "Group fitness using music has been proven to be one of the most effective methods of not only starting to move but being able to keep moving. The dynamic of having an instructor and other people in the room provides motivation. And having a specific schedule of classes will help build a routine and consistency each week."

Consider finding an activity-buddy to take regular walks together at a local park or at a mall. "It's a good way to spend social time that's not focused on a food-related activity while adding movement to your life," he says.

Regular movement and activity can also be a mood elevator and stress reliever.

"Getting outside in the fresh air can do wonders for your outlook," he says. "Purchase a good set of headphones to listen to your favorite tunes to keep you going. Our research has shown that music is a prime motivator for getting people to move more. The tempo can help you keep up the pace, and people who use music as part of their movement or fitness routine are more likely to continue their program."

Browning recommends that before beginning any increased physical activity, check with your physician. "That way you'll be alerted to any potential health

problems and can feel confident to safely begin moving and exercising."

Being consistent will improve fitness, so start with an easy schedule of two to three times a week.

"Set realistic goals, and pace yourself," he says. "Whatever you do, know that you're taking the first step in leading a healthier life. The first moves may be the hardest, but once you've found an activity you enjoy, you'll have set the pace for a healthier life, no matter what your age or ability."

## Tips to get moving for your health

If you've been sedentary, start out slowly with a short walk at an easy pace two to three times a week. Increase your time gradually until you've worked up to 30 minutes several times a week.

- Add days once you've built your endurance.
- Set reasonable goals, and once you've reached them, make your routine more challenging.
- Consider joining a local gym or YMCA to participate in group fitness workouts.
- Identify an activity buddy so you're accountable.
- Search online for workouts such as MOSSA On Demand you can do on your own.
- Add music to your activity; it's a good motivator and will help you keep up the pace.
- Find an activity you like; that way, it's more enjoyable, and you're more inclined to continue.
- Listen to your body. If you feel pain or have shortness of breath, take a break.

*Journalist Pamela Keene writes for more than a dozen publications across the country, specializing in travel, lifestyle, features and gardening. Based in Atlanta, she is a photographer and an avid life-long gardener.*

## Rural Nebraska residents overlooked in FCC service maps

As I write this month's legislative update, the 2023 Nebraska Legislative session is well underway. Hundreds of bills have been introduced, and the Nebraska Rural Electric Association (NREA) has begun our efforts to analyze each bill to better understand how it may impact our member-system public power districts and electric cooperatives.

Already it is clear that access to broadband internet will continue to be an important topic of discussion among policymakers. Nebraska can expect more than \$200 million in federal funds to be distributed across our state to increase connectivity in unserved areas and provide better service in underserved areas. As federal funds become available for expanded broadband development, the Legislature will continue to weigh in on how and where these funds are deployed.

The NREA has found itself in a unique position to advocate for better rural broadband across the areas our members serve. Federal funding allocations for broadband grants are allocated based on existing broadband coverage. Broadband coverage is detailed in maps that have been developed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Unfortunately, Nebraska's maps have largely overstated the levels of broadband coverage our state enjoys, thus we can expect to receive fewer funds for deployment. Additionally, these maps understate the number of "broadband serviceable locations." These are locations where service is needed and qualify to be counted as served, underserved, or unserved.

As the FCC has tried to develop accurate broadband service maps, they have overlooked many of Nebraska's rural homes and businesses that should be included. Nebraska's rural public power systems are uniquely qualified to provide an accurate count of broadband serviceable locations. We are very well aware of where each rural home and business resides. We have an electric meter at each location, and we can very accurately show a location where broadband coverage is needed. As Nebraska continues to challenge the accuracy of the federal broadband maps, the NREA and our members will continue to press this issue to ensure that rural areas are accurately counted and rural Nebraska receives the broadband deployment funds that we are due.

Beyond broadband location challenges, rural citizens like you have a role to play in developing accurate broadband service maps. The existing FCC maps overstate the broadband speeds available at more than one million locations across the state. If a location is deemed to already have broadband service (service at speeds greater than 25/3 Mbps), then it is no longer eligible for federal funds. The vastly overstated level of coverage apparent in the existing FCC maps will certainly result in a reduction in the number of federal funds our state receives.

Every citizen can access these maps and see for themselves the coverage that is claimed to be available at their home or business. The map is available at: [broadbandmap.fcc.gov/home](http://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/home). Once you locate your home or business, look over the list of providers that claim to serve your location and the speed of service they claim to provide. Focus on any providers providing service at levels higher than 25/3 Mbps. If you believe that a company is claiming to provide "broadband" service at 25/3 levels when in fact they do not offer that service, consider challenging this claim. Go to the provider's website, create a chat, and ask what speeds you can get at your location. If they tell you that 25/3 speeds or better are not available at your location, copy and paste the conversation into a Word document, return to the FCC website, and click "Availability Challenge" which is located above the table of providers listed at your location. Each citizen that files a challenge to these maps strengthens our position on this issue.

The NREA is optimistic that our collective efforts will help to demonstrate Nebraska's expansive need for better broadband coverage. Even as we make this argument, the NREA will continue to advocate for using these funds in the unserved areas of our state and reaching out as far as possible into the truly rural areas, beyond the city limits. As we hear about legislation this year that will bring broadband to rural Nebraska, please keep a keen eye on those rural Nebraskans that do not dwell within city limits. As we watch the debate unfold in the Legislature, the Public Service Commission, and within our new governor's broadband office, the NREA will be watching to ensure no one is left without true access to service.

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## **Largest Wild Turkey Research Project in Nebraska Underway**

When state agencies deem wild turkey bag limits not sustainable, they will reduce the number of birds that can be harvested in a season and make additional regulation changes, like eliminating a fall season or limiting non-resident opportunities. While hunting can influence wild turkeys, there are usually other factors at play that lead to population-level declines.

In Nebraska, populations have declined about 45% since wild turkey numbers peaked around 2009.

As a precautionary measure, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission recently reduced the bag limit, decreasing the spring season from three birds to two and the fall from two birds to one. Additionally, the fall

season is now shorter, and the number of available spring permits for non-residents will be limited to 10,000. All these changes will take effect in 2023.

“NGPC has seen alarming declines happening in neighboring states and are starting to feel the impact too,” said Annie Farrell, National Wild Turkey Federation district biologist for Texas, Oklahoma, Nebraska and Kansas. “This is not to say that the bag limit will stay reduced, but science needs to address the declines, be substantiated, and a solution needs to be implemented before we may see a future increase.”

But it is not that hunters are the reasoning that birds are declining, per se; more nuanced factors may be



*Photograph by Michael Bazant*

contributing to the decline, such as brood survival, habitat, prevalence of diseases and probably a combination of all.

In addition to their season and bag limit changes, the NGPC is taking its proactive approach further by conducting the state's most significant wild turkey research project. The agency is contributing nearly \$2 million to understanding the declines and perpetuating the future of our favorite game bird.

The University of Nebraska is leading the project and will work in collaboration with the University of Georgia's Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources.

“Research is needed to understand the factors influencing these declines and to provide basic ecological data so that agencies can ensure management strategies that will result in the sustainability of the state's wild turkey population,” said Mike Chamberlain, Ph.D., Terrell Distinguished Professor of Wildlife Ecology at the University of Georgia.

Beginning in January 2023, wild turkeys will be captured within two specific regions, the Pine Ridge in northwestern Nebraska and the Republic River region in the southwestern part of the state.

The goal is to capture a minimum of 40 hens and 20 gobblers in each region annually for three years. Captured turkeys will be fitted with GPS transmitters and have a blood sample taken to allow for genetic analyses and disease testing.

Any birds captured beyond the sample size of 60 will be leg banded and, too, have a blood sample taken.

The NWTF Nebraska State Chapter is providing the funds for lymphoproliferative disease testing at the University of Georgia in Athens.

“LPDV is a recently characterized retrovirus that has been detected in wild turkeys in all areas surveyed through the U.S. and Canada, and the virus has caused considerable concern among biologists and agencies,” Chamberlain said. “LPDV often occurs concurrently with other infections that contribute to poor health and can cause debilitating to fatal tumors. These retroviruses also have the potential to influence hormonal levels in birds, which can influence reproductive success.”

Once the samples arrive in Athens, the Southeastern Cooperative Disease Study will conduct the LPDV testing for the project.

According to Chamberlain, understanding the prevalence rates of LPDV and coupling it with data gathered from the GPS-VHF transmitters could provide unique insight into why birds are declining.

“Combining the prevalence data with spatial and behavioral data collected via GPS transmitters would allow a unique and powerful tool to understand how LPDV may influence behavior, movements, reproduction and survival,” he said.

# 5 SAFETY TIPS FOR YOUR WORKSHOP



Without taking proper precautions, the enjoyment of a do-it-yourself project can quickly turn into disaster. You may have all the latest power tools, hand tools, hardware and materials, but if you do not put safety first, you may end up with a trip to the hospital instead of a new set of shelves, upgraded lighting in the kitchen or a trendy shiplap accent wall in the bedroom. Here are some fundamental workshop and electrical safety tips to help keep things running smoothly.

## 1 Wear safety gear, glasses and gloves

The first rule of workshop safety is to dress appropriately. Avoid loose clothing that can get caught in power tools. Never wear dangling jewelry or scarves. Roll up your sleeves or choose ones that are tight against your skin. Closed-toe shoes are a must, and steel-toed boots are recommended.

Safety glasses are necessary 100% of the time. Gloves are fine for handling materials. Before you reach for a belt sander or scroll saw, however, take the gloves off to minimize the risk of them getting caught and so you get tactile feedback in case anything goes wrong.

## 2 Observe electrical safety

Before you start any DIY project, inspect all your power tools and their cords for loose plugs, exposed wires or worn insulation. Fires are one of the top dangers when working with electric gear, especially if you have combustible materials around, such as sawdust.

If you must use an extension cord, choose one long, heavy-duty (appropriately rated) cord and keep it untangled and out of the way to prevent tripping and yanking your tools off the workbench. When you are done working, unplug everything from the extension cord and put it away.

## 3 Keep your workshop clean

Anything left on the floor is a tripping hazard, and you do not want to imagine what could happen if you trip while using a power tool. Anything cluttering up your worktable introduces obstacles that can get caught in a saw or drill mechanism or block your ability to move your project safely as you work on it. The byproducts of do-it-yourself work, such as sawdust, cast-off nails and screws, and rags or brushes with potentially combustible or hazardous fluids on them, increase the risk of fires and projectiles.

## 4 Keep tools in good condition

Besides inspecting the cords and plugs for electrical safety, everything works better in the workshop if you have clean, sharp and well-lubricated tools. A dull saw blade brings a much higher chance of injury than a sharp one. It is less likely to cut smoothly through the wood or other material and more likely to kick back and cut you. Dull saws, routers or drill bits also run the risk of breaking during use. Use appropriate lubrication, such as WD-40 or others specifically created for power tools.

## 5 Know your limits

If you have a lot of experience as a do-it-yourselfer, there are projects you can tackle from memory. However, approach anything new as if you are a beginner for maximum workshop safety. Look up reputable guide videos to refresh your skills or learn something new. Most importantly, recognize when you are in over your head and leave those non-DIY projects to the professionals.

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# Wonderful Winter Trails at Nebraska State Parks

Get outdoors this winter and enjoy the invigorating fresh air of a winter's day on a state park trail. These five trails are great choices, offering wildlife viewing, shelter from the wind, and beautiful scenic views to appreciate. Bring a friend and take in the unique beauty that this time of year offers.

## **Cross-country Skiing Trails** *Ponca State Park*

If you enjoy cross-country skiing, Ponca State Park offers two groomed trails this year for visitors to enjoy. The first is 1.5 miles and winds through the park's shooting complex and the G8 group tent area. This area is pristine and quiet, with a lot of beautiful scenery and the chance to see deer along the way.

The second trail is 2 miles and winds along the riverfront, offering gorgeous views of the water. It's very flat, making it a good choice for beginners.

Not interested in cross-country skiing? The park has 22 miles of other trails to enjoy.



## **Turkey Run Trail** *Wildcat Hills State Recreation Area*

Shielded from the winter wind, this 1.2-mile trail at Wildcat Hills State Recreation Area near Gering, is a great choice for a walk on a winter's day. Hikers will see a diversity of topography, including rocky buttes and interesting rock formations, as well as beautiful views of the ponderosa pines and the North Platte River valley. Make sure to check out the layers of sandstone and siltstone in the rock; the trail will let you get a close-up look. There's a chance to see wildlife, as well: deer, turkey, songbirds, and even coyotes or bobcats.

## **South Shores Trail** *Lewis and Clark State Recreation Area*

Roughly 4 miles of trails wind through the South Shore area at Lewis and Clark State Recreation Area. They're an easy walk and give visitors the chance to see the park's cedar and oak woodlands, as well as bluffs overlooking Lewis and Clark Lake and Gavins Point Dam. It's a beautiful view.

Park superintendent Leslie Donner described the trails as a hidden gem. "A lot of people don't realize we have trails there, so once you've tried them, you're kind of hooked," Donner said.

## Riverview Trail

### *Schramm Park State Recreation Area*

The Riverview Trail at Schramm Park State Recreation Area takes only about five minutes to walk, but there's plenty to see. It runs down to the Platte River and offers the chance to see bald eagles, beaver-chewed logs, raccoon prints in the mud, and fish coming up to the shoreline. The trail's short distance and flat surface also makes it ideal for families with young kids or those with limited mobility.

If you'd like to extend your trip and try other trails in the park, the Hackberry Trail and Red Cedar Trail, which wind through the park's forest, are great choices. The trees offer shelter from the wind, and with fewer leaves on the trees, there's better visibility to spot wildlife like raptors, turkey or deer.



## Steamboat Trail

### *Chadron State Park*

The 1.3-mile Steamboat Trail offers stunning scenery, especially when it snows. It takes you through ponderosa pines and curves gently up into the buttes, making it moderately challenging but not a difficult hike. It also takes visitors up to Steamboat Butte, named for its resemblance to the steamboats that once sailed the Missouri River. With scenic views and convenient parking, Steamboat Trail is a great choice for winter hiking.

When you hike, remember to dress for the weather, bring water, walk with friends, and tell someone where you're going. For more information about these trails, and to see an interactive trail map, visit [OutdoorNebraska.gov/hikingtrails](https://OutdoorNebraska.gov/hikingtrails).

Photographs courtesy of NebraskaLand Magazine/Nebraska Game and Parks Commission



A car accident can happen so quickly, yet the final seconds may seem to be in slow motion as the car and its passengers jolt upon contact. Such an accident can inflict serious injury and damage, and when the car wreck involves power poles, there is an added danger.

Knowing what actions to take to stay safe can make the difference between life and death. After a car wreck, it is natural for people to want to get out of the car to assess damage to themselves as well as the vehicle. However, when the wreck involves power poles and lines, that is the exact wrong thing to do.

Should you be involved in an automobile wreck with a power pole, Safe Electricity provides the following safety information:

- Stay in the car. Call 911 to have the utility notified.
- Do not leave the vehicle until utility professionals have de-energized the line and they advise you that it is safe to do so.



- If you must exit the vehicle because it is on fire, jump clear of it with your feet together and without touching the vehicle and ground at the same time. Keeping your feet together, “bunny hop” to safety. Doing this will ensure that you will not have different strengths of electric current running from one foot to another.
  - Be aware that, after an accident with a pole, wires can fall at any time.
  - Downed lines can sometimes show they are live by arcing and

sparkling with electricity, but this is not always the case. Treat all downed wires as though they are energized.

- Remember, most power lines are not insulated. The coating on the lines is for weather proofing and will not offer any protection from the electrical current.
- The tires of the vehicle do not insulate it from electrical dangers. Follow the above safety precautions even if the car has rolled and is upside down or on its side. The vehicle is the path to ground for the electrical current. So while you remain in the car, you are safe. If you step out of the car, you are in danger of becoming the path to ground.

Also be cautious if you witness an accident involving a vehicle and downed lines. Stay back, and warn others to stay away. Make sure the occupants of the car stay inside the vehicle until the utility has arrived to de-energize the lines.

## Murphy



## Use Space Heaters Safely

Heating equipment, such as space heaters, kerosene heaters, fireplaces and wood-burning stoves, is a leading cause of fires in U.S. homes, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The term “homes” includes one-and two-family homes (including manufactured homes), apartments, townhouses and other multi-family dwellings.

- Most home heating fire deaths (81%) included stationary or portable space heaters.
- More than half of the home heating fire deaths were caused by placing heating equipment too close to things that can burn, such as furniture, clothing, or bedding.
- Nearly half (48%) of all home heating fires occurred in December, January and February.
- Failure to clean equipment, such as chimney flues, accounted for a quarter of all heating equipment fires. Electric-powered heating devices were responsible for the largest share of losses, accounting for more than half of the fatalities, three in five injuries and two-fifths of the property damage.

Source: *SafeElectricity.org*

KEEP SAFE  
**AND WARM**  
THIS WINTER



When the chill of fall and winter set in, be aware of **potential fire hazards that are lurking in your home**. Whether keeping warm with heat from your furnace, space heater, fireplace, or electric blanket, **Safe Electricity offers these tips to prevent a fire in your home:**

Always place your space heater on a **steady surface** and away from curtains, tablecloths or other flapping fabrics. Use a space heater with an automatic shut-off switch.



**Have your furnace inspected annually.**



**Inspect electric blankets for scorch marks or visible damage regularly.**

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The importance of farms cannot be understated. Farmers feed our families and keep the country running, but the business brings many challenges, including risk and uncertainty. Finding ways to use less energy can reduce costs and result in energy savings for years to come.

When looking to improve farm efficiency, consider the following areas.

## **Motors and Pumps**

Because motors and pumps account for a significant amount of energy use on a farm, replacing inefficient motors with efficient models can save energy and reduce costs. Adding variable frequency drives (VFDs) allow you to vary the frequency and voltage supplied to the motor or pump to adjust the motor's speed. This saves kilowatt hours and reduces load by only operating at the needed capacity. VFDs can be used in place of a phase converter, which allows use of three-phase power equipment where there is only access to single-phase power.

## **Irrigation**

Upgrade irrigation equipment to use less water, which means less pumping and reducing the amount of water and energy consumed. The goal is to get the right amount of water where it is needed. This can be accomplished by reducing evaporation through system design and fixing leaks in the system. GPS and geographic information system technologies allow for more specific irrigation targeting. Monitor and test systems regularly to ensure maximum efficiency.

## **Lights**

The longer lights are on, the higher the potential for savings. Prioritize replacing incandescent or fluorescent exterior lighting on photocells or lights that stay on all night. LED lights last two to four times longer than fluorescents and 25 to 35 times longer than incandescents. That means less frequent replacement, which saves on materials and labor costs.

## **Heater Controls**

In climates where engine block heaters are used to keep



*Photograph provided by Bonneville Power Administration*

vehicle engines warm enough to start, adding engine block heater controls with temperature sensors and timers will reduce electricity use. To keep water from freezing on farms with livestock, save energy by using stock tank heaters with thermostatic controls, which operate only when needed instead of running constantly. Insulated stock tanks may eliminate the need to heat water.

## **Emerging Technology**

New farming technologies that offer efficiency possibilities include electric tractors, space heating and water heating. Equipment with information technology capabilities can aid efficiency by monitoring conditions and automating farming tasks. As with home efficiency practices, consider the equipment used most and the savings potential from upgrading or modifying existing equipment.

## **Rebates**

About 80% of U.S. farms are located in counties served by public power districts and electric cooperatives. Check with your local electric utility to see if they offer rebates on farming equipment and energy-efficiency projects that help reduce energy use.

Improving efficiency on the farm can result in less energy use, lower bills and improved farming success during challenging financial times.

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# Turn to Tradition for Tex-Mex Taste

The next time your loved ones crave a comforting dish that's warming from the inside-out, turn to an all-time classic with a touch of southern flair.

Take inspiration for this Tex-Mex Beef Lasagna from season 3 of "BBQuest: Beyond the Pit," a video series that dives into the long-held traditions, new flavors and everyday inspiration that make Texas barbecue legendary. Developed from the show by BBQuest co-host and "Hardcore Carnivore" cookbook author Jess Pryles, this tasty take on comfort food can be the perfect solution for a family meal with plenty of leftovers.

To find more pitmaster-worthy recipes, visit [BeefLovingTexans.com](http://BeefLovingTexans.com).



## Oaxaca, Potato and Chorizo Empanadas

Find more delicious additions to your menu at [CaciqueFoods.com](http://CaciqueFoods.com).



## Tex-Mex Beef Lasagna

- 1 **tablespoon olive oil**
- 1 **onion, diced**
- 2 **pounds ground beef**
- 2 **teaspoons kosher salt**
- 1 **teaspoon garlic powder**
- 1/2 **teaspoon cumin**
- 2 **teaspoons chipotle powder**
- 1/2 **teaspoon onion powder**
- 15 **ounces canned corn, drained**
- 15 **ounces canned seasoned black beans, drained**
- 10 **ounces canned diced tomatoes with green chiles, drained**
- 15 **ounces canned red enchilada sauce**
- 1 **cup Mexican crema or sour cream**
- nonstick cooking spray**
- 12 **corn tortillas**
- 8 **ounces shredded Mexican blend cheese**
- cilantro (optional)**
- green onions, thinly sliced (optional)**

Preheat oven to 375 F.  
In large pan or skillet, heat olive oil over medium-high heat then add onion. Cook

until softened, 4-5 minutes, stirring regularly.

Add ground beef and cook, stirring regularly, until beef has browned.

Add kosher salt, garlic powder, cumin, chipotle powder and onion powder; stir well. Add corn, black beans and diced tomatoes. Turn heat to medium and simmer 10 minutes. Remove from heat.

In bowl, combine enchilada sauce and crema; mix well.

Spray casserole dish with nonstick cooking spray. Pour about 1/4 cup enchilada sauce mixture on bottom to prevent tortillas from sticking.

Layer 2-4 tortillas across bottom then top with layer of ground beef mixture. Use ladle to spoon some enchilada sauce mixture on top, distributing evenly. Top with another layer of tortillas then repeat layers until casserole is full, 3-4 layers. Top with shredded cheese.

Loosely cover dish with foil in tent shape to help prevent cheese from sticking then bake 30 minutes.

Remove foil and bake 10-15 minutes until cheese is bubbly and golden brown.

Cool 5 minutes before serving. Top with cilantro and green onions, if desired.

## Oaxaca, Potato and Chorizo Empanadas

### Dough:

- 1 stick, plus 6 tablespoons, cold unsalted butter, cubed
- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup warm water
- 1 egg, at room temperature, whisked

### Filling:

- 1 package Cacique Pork Chorizo
- 2 russet potatoes, cubed
- 5 ounces Cacique Oaxaca Cheese, cubed
- 1 egg, well-beaten, for egg wash

Preheat oven to 350 F.

To make dough: Use pastry cutter or fork to cut butter into flour until it forms crumbly consistency. Sprinkle in salt and stir. Pour in warm water and egg; stir until clumpy dough forms. Knead dough about 5 minutes. Cut dough into 24 pieces and, using hands, roll each piece into ball. With rolling pin, roll balls evenly into 5-6-inch circles.

To make filling: In pan over medium heat, cook chorizo, stirring until it crumbles. Add cubed potatoes. Cover and cook until potatoes are soft then uncover and cook 5-10 minutes until liquid evaporates.

Fill empanadas by placing 2-3 tablespoons chorizo and potato mixture with 2-3 Oaxaca cubes in each dough circle. With finger, run egg wash across one side of circles. Fold over and seal edges by pressing down with fork or create folds and pinch to seal filling inside. Brush tops with egg wash.

Prepare parchment-lined baking sheets and place empanadas on sheets. Bake 12-15 minutes until golden-brown.

## Spicy Pheasant and Pumpkin Stew

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1 1/2 lbs. pheasant, cut into bite size pieces | 2 teaspoons curry powder        |
| 1/2 teaspoon salt                              | 1/4 teaspoon cumin              |
| 1/4 teaspoon pepper                            | 4 cloves garlic, minced         |
| 1 tablespoon olive oil, divided                | 6 cups pumpkin, skinned & cubed |
| 1/2 cup onion, chopped                         | 1 cup low sodium chicken broth  |
| 1 tablespoon ginger, fresh minced              | 1/4 cup fresh cilantro, chopped |
| 1/4 lb. red potatoes, diced                    | 1 tablespoon cornstarch         |

Sprinkle pheasant with salt and black pepper. Heat 1 teaspoon oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat. Add half of the pheasant, and sauté for 8 minutes or until browned. Remove the pheasant from pan. Repeat procedure with 1 teaspoon oil and remaining pheasant; set aside. Heat 1 teaspoon oil over medium-high heat. Add onion and next 5 ingredients (onion through garlic); sauté for 2 minutes. Combine cold chicken broth and cornstarch. Stir in pumpkin and chicken broth; bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer 30 minutes or until pumpkin is tender. Return pheasant to pan; cook 10 minutes or until heated. Stir in cilantro; serve over rice if desired.

Liz Lohar, Alma, Nebraska

## Prized Meatloaf

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| 3 lbs. ground beef                                  | Top with bacon slices   |
| 2 cups crumbled breadcrumbs, soaked in 1/2 cup milk | Optional:               |
| 3 eggs  | 2/3 cup diced celery    |
| 1 onion, chopped                                    | 1/4 cup chopped parsley |
| 1 tablespoon minced garlic                          | Topping:                |
| 1 tablespoon dry mustard                            | 1 1/4 cup catsup        |
| 1 teaspoon thyme                                    | 1/4 cup Worcestershire  |
| 2 teaspoons salt                                    | 1/4 cup brown sugar     |
|   | 4 teaspoons soy sauce   |

Mix above ingredients together and place in baking pan, cover with topping. Bake at 350 degrees for 50 minutes. Sprinkle with canned onions and return to over until crisp.

Nancy Hunt, Oxford, Nebraska

## Hershey Delight

- 1 package crushed graham crackers
- 4-6 Hershey chocolate candy bars, shaved
- 2 16 oz. bags marshmallows
- 2 16 oz. containers Cool Whip

Sprinkle 1/2 graham cracker crumbs on bottom of 9" X 13" pan. Melt marshmallows, cool. Add Cool Whip and candy bar shavings, dump in pan add the other half of graham cracker crumbs to top.

Denise Koehn, Stanton, Nebraska

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# ALWAYS ASSUME ALL DOWNED LINES ARE **LIVE**

Downed power lines can be **deadly**. Always assume a downed power line is **live** and avoid approaching them or anything near them.

## Use Precaution



Downed power lines can energize the ground up to **35 feet away**. Even more in wet conditions.



**Never drive over** downed power lines or anything in contact with them.



If you see a downed power line, **call 911**.



**Never try to move** a downed power line.

If a vehicle contacts a **power line** or **utility pole**...

## STAY AWAY AND CALL 911



Consider **all lines** to be live and dangerous.



Stay in place or inside your vehicle unless you see **fire** or **smoke**.



Warn others to stay at least **35 feet away**.



**Tell others** not to approach vehicle, downed lines, or anything that may be in contact with downed lines.



Call **911**.



## In the Event of Fire or Smoke

**Do not** touch the ground and vehicle at the **same time**.



Jump from the vehicle with your **feet together**.



**Shuffle away**, avoid lifting your feet.





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