



RURAL ELECTRIC

NEBRASKAN

March 2020



BILL HEDGES
AND HIS

**COSMIC
CAT**



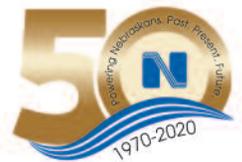
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Freelance writer Tim Trudell shares how Bill Hedges of Lyons, Neb. rekindled his love of movies after retiring from the U.S. Postal Service. He has renovated the old theater into a movie studio where he creates videos for YouTube.



RESCO to the Rescue

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On the cover

Bill Hedges and his cat Penny at Cosmic Films Studios. See the related article on Page 6. Photography by Tim Trudell





by Wayne Price

Does your home have enough insulation?

Does your home feel drafty? Can you see the curtains move when the wind is blowing outside? It might be time to consider sealing up these leaks and adding insulation to your home.

To find leaks, walk around your house on a cold day and feel for drafts around exterior doors and windows, electric outlets, and entrance points for cables and pipes. Be sure to also check dryer vents, gas lines, or any place with an opening in the wall.

Check around recessed lights in the ceiling. If fixtures are installed in the second-story ceiling or the first floor ceiling of a one-story house, a hole is created between a conditioned living area and the open, unconditioned attic area.

Apply caulk, spray foam, or weather stripping to these areas to seal up any leaks. Spray foam should be used on large openings. But be careful: the foam expands and could damage weak wood or lose brick. When purchasing caulk pay careful attention to whether it is rated for interior or exterior use and if you can paint over it.

An insulation kit provides a temporary solution for older windows during winter. Apply a clear plastic sheet to the interior of

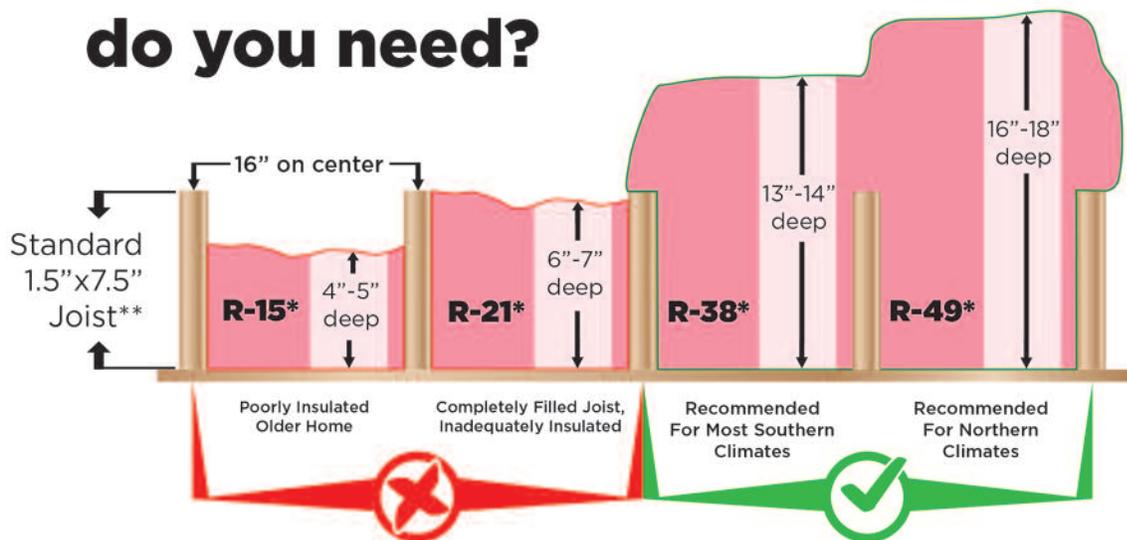
the window, then use a hair dryer to remove wrinkles and make the sheet almost as clear as the glass.

Once leaks are sealed, focus on adding insulation. Insulation is your home's first line of defense in keeping out heat and cold and comes in fiberglass (batt or blown), cellulose, rigid foam board, spray foam, or reflective (also called radiant barrier) forms. Your local hardware store can help you choose the one that best fits your area and particular needs.

When buying insulation, consider its R-value. Typical insulation levels for an attic range from R-30 to R-60, while floor requirements vary from R-13 to R-30.

The most difficult area to add insulation will be your walls. Ideally, you would add wall insulation when replacing the siding on your home. In most areas of the country you will need either R-5 or R-6 insulative wall sheathing, and then fill the wall cavity with blown-in insulation. If you do not have siding or won't be replacing it anytime soon you can cut holes in the wall and blow the insulation in. But this is generally a tricky undertaking and can cause significant damage if not done properly.

How much insulation do you need?



* Recommended Dept. of Energy attic insulation levels for commonly used fiberglass, mineral wool, and cellulose insulation assuming about R-3 per inch.
 ** Standard joists are sold as 2"x8" but usually measure closer to 1.5"x7.5"



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BILL HEDGES AND HIS

COSMIC CAT

Written By
Tim
Trudell

LYONS RETIREE CREATES YOU-TUBE SCI-FI PARODY SERIES STARRING HIS CAT

How many people realize their childhood dreams as adults? Bill Hedges remembers watching episodes of “Lost in Space” on his family’s television set in Lyons, Nebraska. He loved the 1960s science fiction fantasy program. It was the show that ignited his love for movie making. He dreamt of being a filmmaker.

His love of movies led him to work weekends during high school at the Lyons theater. The downtown cinema attracted fans from around Burt County to the town of 700. Hedges worked as a projectionist, making sure people enjoyed movies such as “M*A*S*H,” “Frogs,” “Willard” and “Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory.” Watching the movies from the projection room only fueled that passion.

“My favorite movie was the ‘Absent Minded Professor,’” Hedges says.

While most filmmakers invest in a series of expensive equipment, teen-aged Hedges was thrilled when his father gave him an 8mm camera one year for Christmas.

“It was a lot more affordable,” he jokes.

The self-taught filmmaker roamed around town, and anywhere else he could film, creating his vision of the next masterpiece. But, as he matured, life took over. Following high school, Hedges served in the Navy and would eventually spend a few decades with the US Postal Service, working in Fremont. Making the 35-mile one-way trip daily occupied his life. However, once he retired,

Hedges didn’t hesitate to reclaim his love for movies.

The Lyons Theater closed for good in 1985. The building would be sold and serve as a part of a furniture store. After the store closed, the building sat vacant for several years. Fresh into retirement, Hedges thought the old theater would make an impressive movie studio. So, he bought the building. Renovation included



BILL AND PENNY ON THE
SET AT COSMIC FILMS
STUDIO IN LYONS, NEB.



transforming the front lobby to appear as it did in the late 1970s. Hedges keeps his office out front. Decorated in movie memorabilia, the office also has vintage film cameras – including Hedges’ Super 8mm – on display.

Hedges even rebuilt the projection room to include the old film projector used during the theater’s heyday. Merle Hultman of nearby Oakland, Neb., the last owner of the theater before it closed, had the equipment in storage and gave everything to Hedges to restock the room.

Past the double doors that once led to the auditorium with its large movie screen and theater seating, life-sized props of a spaceship and rocks stand front and center. Scale models of the ship and planet surface are just a few feet away. Lights and cameras abound. Scattered among the movie props are remnants from the town’s former bowling alley, tools and other props. Welcome to Cosmic Films Studio. The old Lyons Theater is now home to the stories of Penny, aka Cosmic Cat.

“I get to relive my childhood,” Hedges says. “How many people get to play pretend as adults?”

Storage space in the studio includes other props, such as an Egyptian crypt complete with

columns. Hedges traveled to Illinois one weekend to purchase one of the last remaining computer servers created by Burroughs Corporation in the 1960s. Hedges figures he’ll use it in upcoming episodes.

Cosmic Films Studio extends to the Hedges’ home. Using part of the family’s basement for interior scenes aboard the ship, Hedges goes all out to create a fun and somewhat realistic look at life aboard a spaceship. The basement also includes a film room where Hedges and guests can watch old episodes of “Lost in Space” on blu-

ray or any other movie that may pique his interest. With a sloping floor found in movie theaters, the viewing room includes seats from the Lyons theater. Movie posters hang on the wall outside the theater room, with a working popcorn machine nearby. After catching a movie in the basement, you can head over to the 1960s-themed malt shop, also in the basement. Toss a quarter in the juke box and enjoy the sounds of the era on 45 rpm records.

Before filming his first movie, Penny needed to be trained. Adopting her from the Nebraska Humane Society, Hedges set out to teach Penny how to act. Several months and treats later, she was ready for her close-up. He actually adopted a second cat, Judy, who is the perfect double for Penny. Each cat has her talents and both are used in each movie. The original Penny is excellent for close-ups and scenes where she needs to sit still. Judy’s talents include action scenes.

“I also have stuffed cats, who are the stunt doubles for action scenes,” he says.

More on Page 8



Cosmic Cat From page 7

Joining Penny, with her black coat and beautiful yellow eyes, Hedges travels the universe in search of new life and new planets. What started as an idea to create YouTube videos as parodies of “Lost in Space” – Hedges’ favorite show during his childhood – has transformed into original stories, often with a nod to classic shows, such as “Twilight Zone.”

While it’s fun to create the movies, working with the cats can be challenging.

“It still takes many takes to get what you want on film,” Hedges says. “And in-between shots they wander off in the studio and we have to look for them sometimes. They do enjoy going to the studio though because it gives them a new world to explore.”

Having two episodes of “Cosmic Cat” available on YouTube, Hedges and Penny have enjoyed traveling through space together. Hedges completed filming three episodes over the summer of 2019 and plans to release them throughout 2020. Expanding beyond the duo, episodes, with each written and directed by Hedges, include area actors, eager to act alongside the feline star.

Katie Otten, who, along with husband Joshua Caito, is a renowned cosplay performer in the Midwest, has performed in a couple of episodes. Portraying the human form of Penny, Otten enjoyed her time with the duo and looks forward to future endeavors.

“Working with him is a blast,” she says. “Because he’s kind, creative and so dedicated.”

Hedges’ direction and production management also impressed her. “Each time we had two full days of filming, but we were incredibly efficient,” Otten says. “He would have everything planned out and



story boarded already.”

Hedges’ love for his craft is evident with the attention to detail with the studio equipment and props. The life-sized props match the scaled down models perfectly, so when you watch an episode, you don’t notice the transition from one scale to the other. His editing skills are outstanding. But, he’s quick to say it’s more than a one-person show.

“I am lucky that I have

professional actors, mainly from Omaha and Lincoln, who have volunteered to help with my series, and other crew as well,” Hedges says. “Nebraska has a lot of independent filmmakers who help each other out with their projects, and I’ve met some at film festivals, some from helping them with their movies, and some have literally walked into the studio for a visit and then told me that they’d like to be a part of any of my projects.”

“I also have a small core group in Lyons that I use to help as my crew, and sometimes I’ll ask friends to act in it for some parts that I know they’d be good in. Everyone has told me that they really enjoy working on the movies and have asked to come back for future episodes. It’s definitely a different experience for them working here since the series is unique and different.”

Hedges’ filming talents have come in handy for the Lyons community. In 2015, he created a film history of downtown, capturing the town from the 1950s through recent years. Each era used vehicles and costumes accurate to the decade. The film was premiered on Main Street. Lyons, as part of an art grant to help rural communities, constructed a theater that looks like a storefront. The faux storefront can be lowered to the ground, becoming a stage or a set of bleachers can be rolled on to it. People lined up there to watch

“Decades,” enjoying the historical look at their hometown.

While he enjoys making the “Cosmic Cat” movies, Hedges doesn’t plan to challenge George Lucas or Steven Spielberg anytime soon. He’s

having fun reliving his youth and spending time with his feline actors. He’s pretty sure the cats also enjoy starring in the movies.

“They just like getting out of the house and seeing something new.”



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Security Tips for Connected Devices

by Abby Berry

Today's market offers a plethora of new gadgets and devices that claim to make our homes smarter, safer and more efficient. But as with any new smart technology, consumers should take extra precautions to ensure these devices are secure.

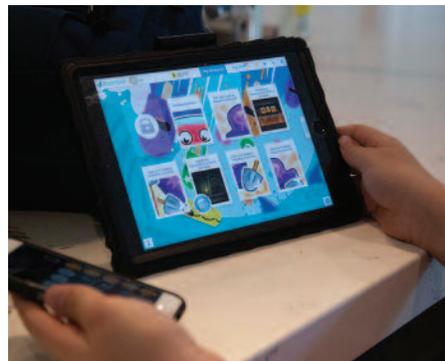
Internet-connected cameras have brought significant convenience to the way we monitor the security of our homes, children—even our furry family members! With the simple swipe of a smart phone, homeowners can instantly keep a watchful eye from afar. But in recent months, some consumers found themselves in scary situations when hackers were able to tap into Internet-connected security cameras in their homes. This enabled the hackers to view and speak to the people, including children, inside the homes.

As connected devices become increasingly popular, it's important that we know how to secure our digital lives. The U.S. Department of Commerce offers the following tips for protecting smart devices:

- Get creative with passwords. Change your device's factory security settings from the default password. This is one of the most important steps to take in the protection of internet-connected devices. Consider creating the longest password or passphrase permissible, and use familiar phrases you'll remember,



As connected devices, like home monitoring and security cameras, become increasingly popular, it's important that we know how to secure our digital lives.



like the lyrics to your favorite song.

- Keep tabs on your apps. Most connected devices are supported by a smart phone application. Your smart phone could be filled with apps running in the background or using default permissions you never realized you approved, gathering personal information without your knowledge while also putting your identity and privacy at risk. Check your app permissions and say “no” to privilege requests that don't make sense.

- Secure your network. Properly secure the wireless network you use for Internet-connected devices. Consider placing these devices on a separate and dedicated network.

- Connect and protect. Whether it's your computer, smartphone, game console, camera or other connected devices, the best defense is to stay on top of things by updating to the latest security software, web browser and operating system. If you have the option to enable automatic updates to defend against the latest risks, turn it on.

Convenient, connected devices are here to stay—and unfortunately, so are the hackers. But by taking extra steps to safeguard your network and devices, you can keep your digital life secure as possible.

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Keep your family pets safe around electricity

For pet owners, playful dogs and curious cats become part of the family. Responsibility is an important part of pet ownership, and your pet's safety depends on you. You can help keep your furry friend safe by learning about and taking action on potential electrical hazards in your home.

"Puppies and kittens are naturally curious and tend to turn unexpected household items into play or chew toys," says Molly Hall, executive director of the Energy Education Council's Safe Electricity program. "Puppy or kitten-proofing a home will help keep this new member of your family safe."

Electrical cords can easily become an object of play for pets, but when sharp teeth clamp down on the cord and break through the rubber coat and expose the wire, this can shock your pet and become a fire hazard in your home. Here are some tips to prevent cords from becoming a chew toy:

- Wind up excess cords and hide

them from view or place cords out of pet's reach. This could be done by hiding them behind furniture or hanging them off the floor.

- Coat cords with a bitter substance to make them undesirable to pets. Appropriate and safe products can be purchased online or at pet stores.

- Reprimand pets for playing with electrical cords. Pets need to learn these are not toys.

Remember to continuously check cords for fraying or bite marks, and replace them accordingly.

"It may only take one bite with sharp teeth to create a shock or start a fire," Hall warns. "Provide your pet with new and different chew toys to keep them entertained so electrical cords do not become a dangerous replacement."

Make sure plugs are completely plugged into outlets. Partially exposed prongs are a hazard for curious pets. Remember to unplug all appliances and electronics not in use to cut electric current.

Discourage pets from sleeping near

or behind electronics or appliances. Many pets are attracted to the warmth, but this is a potential fire hazard. Pets need to be kept away from all electrical connections.

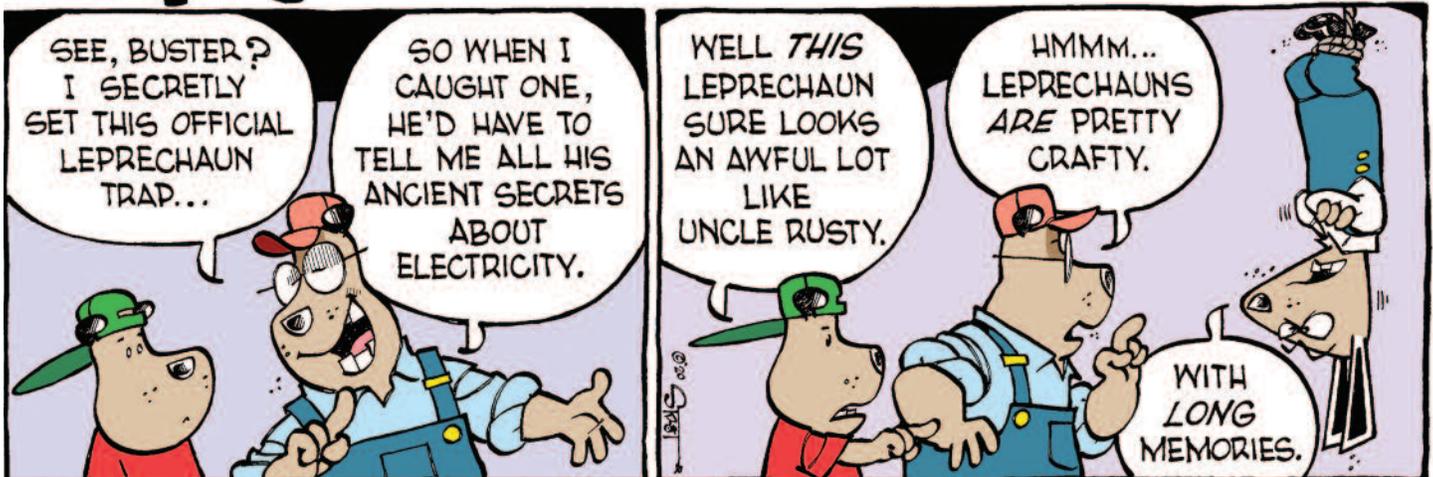
All outlets near sinks or bathtubs should be equipped with a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). Playful pets can knock radios, curling irons, and other electrical devices into water, creating a dangerous situation. GFCIs stop the flow of electricity instantly if there is a problem and can save lives.

For those with fish, be sure cords attached to an aquarium have a drip loop—cords that slack below the outlet—to make sure water does not run into the outlet.

If a pet should receive a shock, never touch the animal until you know it is away from the power source or the electric current is shut off in order to prevent injury to yourself. Once it is clear to approach the pet, give it medical treatment immediately.

For more pet safety information, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Murphy





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RESCO to the Rescue

Supply co-op quietly meets rural power needs

by Dave Hoopman

By April 11, 2019, winter was supposedly three weeks in the past, a falsehood laid bare by the snow, ice, and wind storms wreaking havoc that day on rural power systems across the upper Midwest.

Hardest hit was Freeborn-Mower Cooperative Services in southeast Minnesota, with an electric distribution system serving more than 18,000 member-owners. Roughly half this system was knocked out with nearly 500 poles down, many snapped off at ground level by the combination of stiff winds and heavy ice accumulation on the wires. Remarkably, repairs progressed so rapidly that borrowed line crews were able to be released from mutual assistance work less than a week later.

No single factor enables such a recovery. Among the affected power providers across Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin, credit goes to a stellar work ethic, robust mutual aid programs—line crews from 17 cooperatives in neighboring states were dispatched to Freeborn-Mower—and not least, a multi-state organization designed to meet the special challenges of building rural electric utility systems. Last April's storm response would probably have taken a good deal longer and would most certainly have been costlier, had it not been for the existence of RESCO—known more formally as the Rural Electric Supply Cooperative—a not-for-profit provider of materials and equipment for rural electric co-ops and, in Nebraska, public power districts and municipal utilities.

The company that became RESCO was initially incorporated in 1936,

largely in response to the growth of rural electrification being stifled by lack of access to materials. “There were poles standing with no wires attached to them,” RESCO President and CEO Matt Brandrup told us at the cooperative’s Middleton, Wisconsin headquarters in December.

“The investor-owned utilities held a stranglehold on the supply chain for needed materials,” he said. “We broke that stranglehold on behalf of public power.”

Economy and Empathy

A lot has changed in the decades since for-profit utilities with no interest in serving lightly-populated areas treated the rise of rural electrification as an irritant to be snuffed out. But whether the motivation was deliberate denial of resources as in the past, or the more benign differences between business models as they play out today, there are strong advantages, especially for people served by public-power utilities, in choosing to obtain basic materials through a RESCO-style cooperative.



RESCO provides materials and equipment for rural electric co-ops and, in Nebraska, public power districts and municipal utilities.

In Nebraska, 17 public power districts and eight municipal utilities are RESCO members.



“Our not-for-profit business model allows us to price very competitively, which ultimately benefits the end-use consumer,” Matt Brandrup says, “and if there are profits, that money is returned to members in the form of patronage credits—a true not-for-profit approach.”

Moreover, growth in the number of utilities choosing membership builds the cooperative’s purchasing power, ultimately allowing RESCO to keep its gross margins lean—or even reduce them—and still manage to cover its relatively fixed overhead costs.

The cooperative provides construction materials and varied supplies for member utilities in nine states: Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. In Nebraska, 17 public power districts and eight municipal utilities are RESCO members.

Phil Burke, CEO of the Polk County Rural Public Power District, is a director on the RESCO board, and stresses the need to be mindful



of costs passed along to Nebraska electric ratepayers.

“Our customers might not give too much thought to the transformers, poles, and wires they see as they drive around our district, but we are very conscientious about where it comes from,” Burke observes. “We know that every bolt, insulator and wire is paid for by our customers and we need to be thoughtful about the materials we use and the amount they cost. The materials we buy need to perform well at a good price point and RESCO can provide that. Savings on material costs can really cut down on our costs, and in turn, our customers’ electric costs.”

Patronage credits are another feature of co-op membership that’s not to be ignored. Brandrup noted that during the past five years, RESCO has returned some \$520,000 to its Nebraska members. “Our for-profit competitors do not do that and it very much differentiates us,” he says.

A further differentiation is that people whose power providers are

served by RESCO’s competitors can’t count on enjoying any of the benefit associated with local ownership and control. As Bruce Tegtmeier, a director of the Norris Public Power District and member of the RESCO board explains, “It’s important that we are properly represented as members. Every RESCO member-owner has the same equal say as every other member. It gives us fair, direct representation and allows us to make decisions for our greater benefit.”

There When It Matters

A mission focused on economic savings—as opposed to a fatter bottom line—and an organizational structure familiar to consumers served by public power districts might add up to significant attractions all by themselves. But those attractions don’t fade away even at times when they aren’t necessarily at the top of everyone’s priority list, that is, the times when weather intervenes to cut off the reliable power that makes a modern

society possible.

Arguably, the greatest advantage for utilities purchasing supplies through their own member-controlled co-op is most apparent when there’s no time to waste obtaining materials and getting construction done, so as to make those occasional trips back to our pre-electricity past as brief as possible.

To that end, early in 2019 RESCO established a warehouse in Kearney, and has pre-positioned dedicated storm-response trailers in the states it serves, to support resilient electric systems that can bounce back rapidly. When damaging weather occurs, RESCO can have people and materials on the scene that same day to help restore power.

Jeff Burk is purchasing and warehousing manager for York, Nebraska’s Perennial Power, a RESCO-member public power district. Burk notes that RESCO is “conveniently located, so it is like they are storing materials for us. It makes for very fast delivery.”

Like so much about the modern U.S. energy system, it’s the things you don’t notice that tell you it’s working. Circumstances that would bring the end-use electric ratepayer in direct contact with RESCO are uncommon, and yet the cooperative’s existence relates directly to those individual ratepayers. Its presence for purposes of storm response and even routine construction and maintenance ultimately saves money and reduces inconvenience for the ratepayer, and most of the time it goes happily unnoticed.



Energy efficient landscaping tips

by Pat Keegan

Q : A friend told us that if our landscaping is done right, it can help lower our home's monthly energy bill. What choices can we make that will reduce our home energy use?

A : Your friend is right. The decisions you make about your home's landscaping can help you stay cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter. With summer just around the corner, let's start by looking at how strategic planting can help cool your home.

Direct sunlight hitting windows is a major contributor to overheating your home during summer months. By planting trees that block sunlight, you can improve comfort and reduce your air conditioning energy use. If the trees eventually grow tall enough to shield your roof, that's even better.

The most important windows to shade are the ones facing west, followed by windows that face east. Morning and evening sunlight hits the home more directly than mid-day sunlight. Also, an eave on the south side of your home can help shade your windows during mid-day sun.

If you live in a colder climate, planting deciduous trees that lose their leaves in fall will shield your windows in summer and allow sunlight in during winter to help warm your home. A simple approach that can deliver some shade the first year is to plant a "living wall" of vines grown on a trellis next to your home.

One cooling strategy is to make sure your air conditioning compressor has some plants near it. Just make sure the plants aren't too close. The compressor should have a five-foot space above it and a two-

to three-foot gap all the way around so that it gets enough air movement to do its job.

There are two other factors to consider that are important in some areas of the country:

1. Water is becoming more precious and more expensive. When you pay your water bill, much of that cost is for the energy required to pump water to your home, or perhaps you have your own well. Either way, reducing water use saves you money and reduces energy use.

2. If you live in an area that has wildfires, you should definitely take that into consideration as you develop a landscaping plan. What and where you plant on your property can either increase or decrease the risk of fire reaching your home.

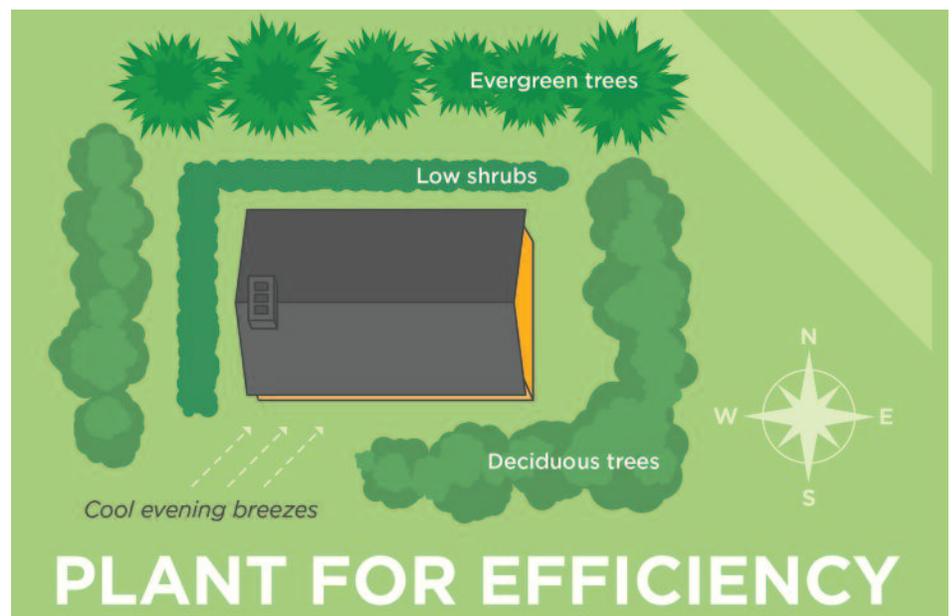
Now let's talk about how landscaping impacts your home's energy use and comfort in the winter.

If you live in a colder climate, a

solid wind break can cut harsh winter winds. The best solution for this is a solid row of trees (preferably evergreen) on the windward side of the home, with shrubs underneath the trees to keep the wind from sneaking through. If you live in a warmer climate, you would not want a wind barrier as wind flow will help cool your home.

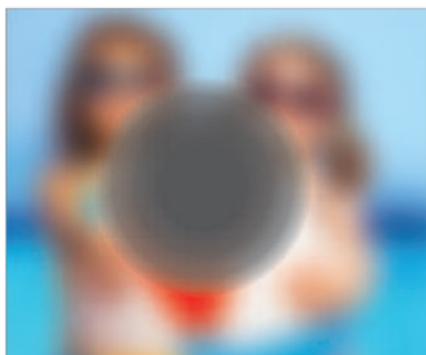
If you live in a cooler climate that isn't too humid, planting a row of shrubs a foot from your home can provide more efficiency. By stopping air movement, it can form a dead air space around the home that acts as "bonus" insulation. While you're at it, you could add some foundation insulation if you have a home with a basement or if it's built on a slab. In a humid climate, however, leave several feet of space between landscaping and the home as air flow is necessary to avoid moisture-related home damage.

These are just a few ideas to help you get started. I should also note that as with any landscaping projects that require digging, remember to dial 8-1-1 to ensure all underground utility lines are properly marked and flagged *before* you start the work. Happy planting!



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:

Robert Stamm, O.D.
Low Vision Optometrist
Member IALVS

Toll Free:
(877) 393-0025



Calendar of Events

MARCH

NORTHEAST

March 1, Northeast Area Jazz Ensemble, Plainview High School Auditorium, Plainview, Neb., 2 p.m.

March 5-14, Norfolk Community Theatre presents Orson Wells' War of the Worlds, Northeast Community College, Cox Activity Center, Norfolk, Neb., 7 p.m.

March 7, 2020 Norfolk Gun Show, Divots Devent Center 4200 W. Norfolk Ave, Norfolk, Neb., 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

March 10, Annual Ag Appreciation Dinner, Nielsen Center, West Point, Neb., Social hour at 6 p.m., dinner at 7p.m. Entertainment: Brugger Bros.

March 11-14, St. Patrick's Day Celebration, O'Neill, Neb. Residents in O'Neill prepare for the St. Patrick's Day celebration honoring the patron saint of Ireland.

March 20-22, Norfolk Home Builders Home and Garden Show, Chuck M. Pohlman Ag Complex, 2301 E. Benjamin Ave., Norfolk, Neb.

NORTHWEST

March 21, Nite on the Town, Bayard American Legion, 5:00 pm. This is a fundraiser for Chimney Rock Pioneer Days, the night will include a steak and shrimp dinner served at 6:00 p.m., live auction and a silent auction. Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased at Chimney Rock Chiropractic in Bayard or Federal Crop Agency in Scottsbluff.

March 27-29, Scottsbluff Kennel Club Dog Show, Scotts Bluff County Fairground, 130625 County Rd E, Mitchell, Neb. A three day AKC all breed dog show.

SOUTHEAST

March 14, Shamrock Shuffle 5K Walk/Run/ Crawl, Jefferson County Fairgrounds 4H Bldg., Fairbury, Neb., 10 a.m. This is the one event of the year where you can run, walk or crawl while wearing your favorite Irish gear. Stick around for the post-race celebration with food, awards, giveaways and live entertainment by Shawn Cole Duo.

SOUTHWEST

March 14-15, National Quilting Day Celebration, Arbor Lodge Mansion, 2600 Arbor Ave, Nebraska City, Neb., 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Arbor Lodge Mansion will host a special exhibit featuring quilts from the Arbor Lodge collection as well as heirloom quilts and needlework from the late 1800s and early 1900s. Demonstrators from the Heritage Needlework Guild will be on hand throughout the weekend to share their talents.

SOUTH CENTRAL

March 24, Highline Electric 82nd Annual Meeting, Phillips County Event Center, Holyoke, Colo. A meal will be provided. Doors open at 5:00 for registration and the meal will be from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The business session will begin promptly at 6:30 p.m. You must be present to win one of the many door prizes, plus members in attendance will receive a gift.

March 18, Crane Photography Class, The Archway, Kearney, Neb., 9 - 10:30 a.m. Take outstanding wild life pictures, even with a cell phone. Instructors Patty Geist and Don Brockmeier will help you create beautiful images of your crane viewing adventure to enjoy and share for years to come. Register at www.archway.org

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



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

Niobrara's Barry DeKay elected NPPD chair for 2020

Barry DeKay of Niobrara was elected as Nebraska Public Power District's Board Chair for 2020 following that body's annual election of officers in Columbus, replacing Gary Thompson of Clatonia who had served the past two years.



Barry DeKay

Also elected were Bill Johnson of Pilger as first vice chair, Mary Harding of Plattsmouth as second vice chair, and Jerry Chlopek of Columbus as secretary. NPPD Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Traci Bender was elected treasurer.

"I look forward to leading the Board in 2020 as we continue to work to keep our electric rates stable, provide strong customer service, and monitor and prepare for future regulations that would impact NPPD and our customers," he stated. "I also want to thank Director Thompson for his leadership the past two years as Chair of the Board."

DeKay represents Subdivision 2, which consists of Keya Paha, Boyd, Holt, Knox, Cedar, Garfield, Wheeler, Valley, Greeley, Sherman, Howard and Boone Counties.

DeKay began his term of office in 2015 when he was first elected to the NPPD Board, filling the seat previously held by Dennis Rasmussen. A native of Knox County, DeKay has been ranching

for 43 years with his brother, and they are the fourth generation to work the family land.

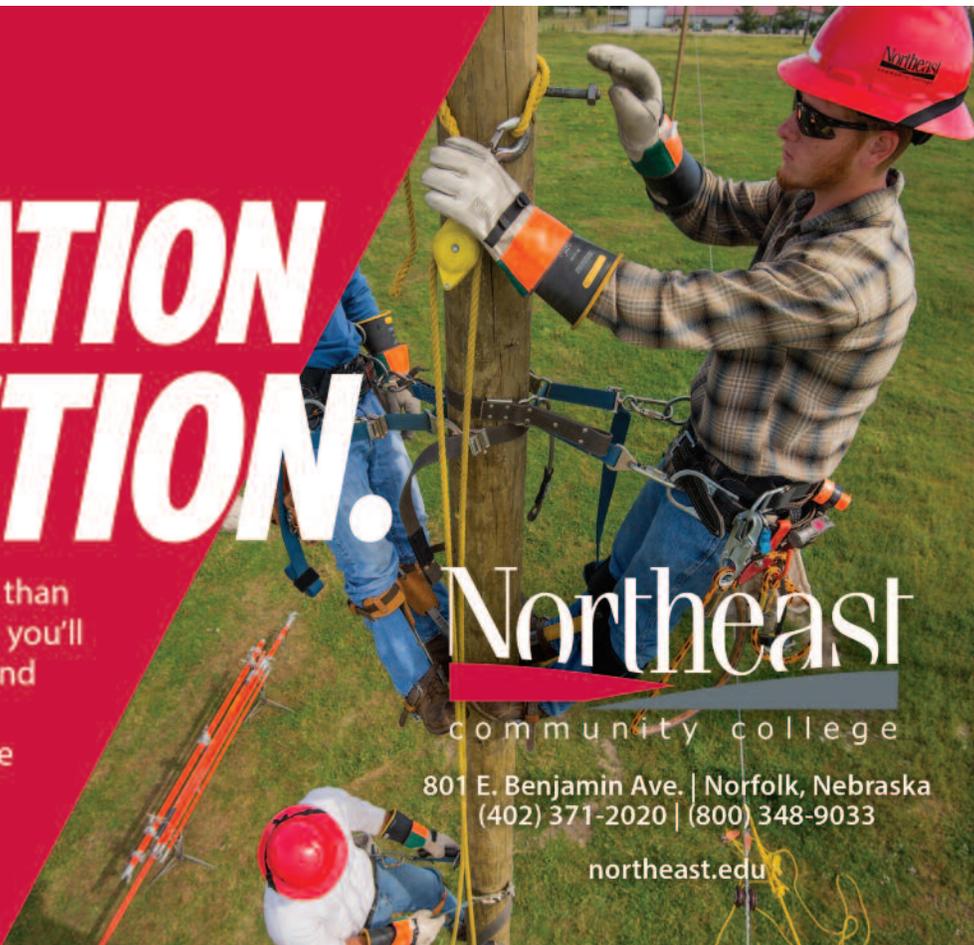
DeKay served on the Board of the Niobrara Valley Electric Membership Corporation between 1999 and 2014, holding the office of vice president in 2002-2003, and president between 2003-14. In addition, he held the titles of treasurer, vice president and president with the Nebraska Rural Electric Association.

He and his wife, Brenda, have two children. He is a member of the Knox County Cattlemen and Nebraska Cattlemen, serves as president of the Niobrara Valley Hospital Foundation, and is a council member of Sacred Heart Parish of Boyd County. He is also a high school and college basketball official.

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Serve up a caravan of fun party dishes

Make your next fiesta one to remember with colorful decor, festive touches and, perhaps most importantly, unique and mouthwatering recipes that bring guests back for seconds.

To achieve the ideal flavors of a fiesta done right, try bringing something new to the table with recipes like these party-pleasing Tortilla Pizzas for a special main dish, crunchy and refreshing Coleslaw with Green Chile Dressing on the side.

These party-perfect recipes can help you take flavors to new heights while adding a kick of spice when you incorporate quality ingredients like Rio Luna Organic Peppers. The peppers are cultivated by a company with more than three decades of experience. They manage the whole pepper process from annual seed selection to grower partnerships, cultivation and packing.

Available in four spicy varieties – Diced Jalapenos, Nacho Sliced Jalapenos, Diced Green Chiles and Large Chopped Green Chiles – you can add a pop of peppers to your next celebration. Because the peppers are organic certified, non-GMO, fat free, cholesterol free, low calorie and kosher, you'll be able to pack an extra punch of spice without serving up unnecessary ingredients.

To find more ways to spice up your fiestas as well as everyday recipes, visit riolunapeppers.com/our-meals



Tortilla Pizzas

- 4 flour tortillas (8 inches)
- 1 can (15 ounces) refried black beans
- 4 fresh plum tomatoes, chopped
- 1 can (4 ounces) Rio Luna Organic Nacho Sliced Jalapenos, drained
- 1 1/3 cups shredded Mexican cheese blend
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro
- chipotle-ranch dressing

Heat oven to 400 F.
Bake tortillas directly on oven rack 2 minutes. Cool. Spread 1/4 cup beans onto each tortilla. Top evenly with tomatoes, jalapenos and cheese.

Bake 8 minutes, or until cheese is melted. Sprinkle with cilantro just before serving.

For added flavor, drizzle pizzas with chipotle-ranch dressing.

Tantalizing Toppings For Tacos

When it comes to supplying fiesta foods that fit almost anyone's taste, tacos are a go-to party favorite. However, trying to list all the possible taco-topping options can be an overwhelming task for many hosts. Along with your choice of taco filling, consider these toppings when building the perfect taco bar at your next fiesta:

- Shredded cheese
- Sour cream
- Beans (black, pinto or refried)
- Salsa
- Shredded lettuce
- Rice
- Rio Luna Organic Peppers
- Chopped tomatoes
- Chopped onions
- Diced avocado or guacamole
- Sliced black olives
- Corn
- Cilantro



Coleslaw with Green Chile Dressing

- 1 1/2 cups mayonnaise
- 1 cup sour cream
- 3/4 cup Rio Luna Organic Diced Green Chiles, drained
- 6 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons Sriracha sauce
- 2 tablespoons agave nectar
- 2 cups shredded napa cabbage
- 1 cup shredded red cabbage
- 1 cup shredded carrots
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced white onions
- 2 1/4 teaspoons kosher salt, plus additional, to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper, plus additional, to taste

In medium bowl, whisk mayonnaise, sour cream, chiles, apple cider vinegar, Dijon mustard, Sriracha and agave nectar until well blended.

In large bowl, combine napa cabbage, red cabbage, carrots, onions, salt and pepper. Add mayonnaise mixture; toss until well coated. Season with additional salt and pepper, if desired, to taste.

Tip: Coleslaw can be prepared ahead of time and refrigerated up to 1 day. Toss before serving.

Horseradish Meatloaf

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 1/2 lb. ground beef | 2 teaspoons salt |
| 2 cups breadcrumbs (approx. 6 slices) | 1/4 teaspoon pepper |
| 1 egg (beaten) | 1/4 teaspoon dry mustard |
| 1 1/2 cup whole milk | 1/2 teaspoon sage |
| 4 tablespoons chopped onion | 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce |
| 1 tablespoon catsup | 2 teaspoons (or more) horseradish |

Shape into 8 individual loaves and place on lightly greased baking sheet and cover with the following sauce. Sauce – 1/4 cup chopped onion, 1/4 cup sugar, 1/8 teaspoon pepper, 1/4 cup catsup, 3 tablespoons vinegar, 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce. Cook sauce for 5 minutes, then pour over meatloaves. Bake loaves for one and a half hours at 350 degrees.

Sharon Kindschuh, Beemer, Nebraska

4 Bean Baked Beans

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1/2 lb. browned, diced bacon | 1 cup brown sugar |
| 2 medium onions, diced | 1/2 cup vinegar |
| 2 1 lb. cans butter beans | 1 teaspoon dry mustard |
| 1 1 lb. can lima beans | 1/2 cup BBQ sauce |
| 1 1 lb. can kidney beans | Dash of liquid smoke |
| 1 1 lb. can pork-n-beans | |

Place in crockpot on low for four hours. Or bake in oven at 350 degrees for one hour.

Katherine Weatherwax, Oxford, Nebraska

Peanut Butter Cheesecake Pie

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1 8 oz. package cream cheese | 1 large carton prepared topping or 1 package powdered dream whip (mixed according to directions) |
| 1/2 cup peanut butter | |
| 1 cup powdered sugar | |
| 1/2 cup milk | |

Blend all together and place in prepared graham cracker crust. Top with crushed peanuts or nuts. Freeze for 2 to 3 hours, then leave in fridge or in freezer. Fast and simple to prepare and very yummy.

Bonnie Ross, McCook, Nebraska

February Recipe Correction - Baked Fudge Pudding

Instead of putting 1 3/4 cups hot water in separate baking pan, pour hot water over the top of mix and topping in the pan then bake.



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NREA is the statewide trade association representing 25 public power districts and 9 rural electric cooperatives across the State of Nebraska. The Board of Directors (Board) seeks qualified candidates with the ability to oversee the services provided to the membership of the association.

The Board is seeking a leader who possesses outstanding communication and management skills, and the ability to administer a member-focused association. The ideal candidate must have 3-5 years of successful senior management experience and effective leadership skills. Candidates with a clear understanding of the challenges facing rural Nebraska, a strong commitment to address the needs of rural areas, and a solid understanding and familiarity with the rich Nebraska culture will be preferred.

The successful candidate will have high integrity, encourage teamwork, and inspire others, while providing innovative, visionary, and strategic leadership to both the NREA staff and association members. The ability to quickly grasp the operational and financial requirements of the electric utility industry is essential. Interest in building relationships and establishing trust with team members, directors, managers, the community, and associated organizations is paramount.

The General Manager is responsible for the direct management of the NREA staff, which provides its members service and assistance in the areas of: job training and safety; legislative advocacy; regulatory and legal compliance; public and consumer relations; employee, director and management training; and credit union management. This position reports directly to the Board and advises and assists the Board on matters of policy, key financial matters, operational affairs, and the development of the association's strategic direction.

NREA is located in Nebraska's state capital. Lincoln has a population of 300,000 and a rich quality of life that includes excellent educational, cultural, and recreational opportunities. The association offers an excellent benefits package, including a competitive salary commensurate with qualifications.

Qualifications and Requirements:

- Bachelor's Degree in a related field or a combination of education and experience;
- Three to five years of demonstrated senior management experience;
- Strong verbal and written communication skills;
- Familiarity of Nebraska is strongly preferred.

Please electronically submit cover letter, resume, and a minimum of three professional references by February 29, 2020 (finalists are expected to be selected by May 14, 2020), to: David A. Jarecke, Interim General Manager, NREA c/o Jennifer Lilledahl
Email: jen@nebrenergylaw.com
An Equal Opportunity Employer. All replies are confidential.

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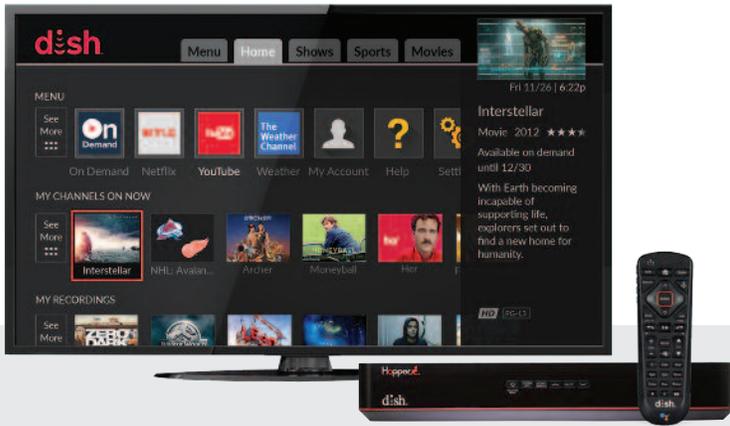
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