

Inside:

- Rural Issues with Gov. Pete Ricketts
- Winter Barns Across Nebraska
 A Visit to a Tree Farm
- On Going Home: Seeking Opportunity in Rural Nebraska

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Generosity isn't just for the holidays

At Tri-State, supporting our members and their communities is what we do. We tackle the challenges of today and tomorrow together – that's the cooperative difference. From our family to yours, stay safe and happy holidays. Find these stories and more at www.tristate.coop.



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Tri-State is a not-for-profit power supplier to cooperatives and public power districts in Colorado, Nebraska, New Mexico and Wyoming.

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Staff

Editor *Wayne Price*

Editorial Assistant Tina Schweitzer

CEO Dennis Houston

President Bryan Monahan, Panhandle Rural Electric Membership Association

Vice President/Secretary A.C. (Pat) Hecox, Dawson Public Power District

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Contents







6 Rural Issues with Gov. Pete Ricketts

Nebraska's Governor Pete Ricketts sits down to discuss the electric industry, rural Nebraska, and the upcoming Nebraska Unicameral legislative session.

8 Winter Barns Across Nebraska

Kathy Chase has taken a photograph of a barn in all 93 counties. She explains how old rustic Nebraska barns began to catch her eye and inspire her heart.

2 A Visit to a Tree Farm

There's nothing like going directly to the farm and cutting down your own tree. Nebraska Christmas tree growers have your holiday covered.

20 On Going Home

Caleb Pollard, founder of Scratchtown Brewing Company in Ord, Neb., shares how small towns can provide a stable community base for people and families to thrive.

Departments

Editor's Page Safety Briefs/Murphy Energy Sense Down Home Recipes Marketplace

Editor's Page



Wayne Price

A New Look and Feel

As I start my 20th year as Public Affairs Director and Editor at the Nebraska Rural Electric Association, I am excited to share some changes taking place to our monthly publication.

Our monthly publication's new name is *Nebraska Magazine* and will include more stories that tell the rural Nebraska story. For example, in this issue you can read about a woman who started a journey to photograph a barn in each of Nebraska's 93 counties. There is an interview with Governor Pete Ricketts, who shares his thoughts on rural Nebraska issues and the challenges that many residents face in these unprecedented times.

Another article, written by Caleb Pollard of Ord, Nebraska, explains how he and his wife made the move to a small community in order to raise a family and take advantage of all the things a rural town has to offer.

I hope that some of these articles resonate with you, as they have with me. Our NREA team and magazine partners worked over the last few months to create an updated look and feel to the magazine. The new redesign will

feature more vibrant photographs and graphic images. There will be more articles from local and regional writers from around the state, as well as amazing photography from Nebraska photographers. We want to share the unique stories about the people and places that are part of this place we call home.

A goal that our magazine staff is working towards with the redesign is to improve and increase advertisers and products from Nebraska businesses.

We would love to get your thoughts and feelings about the new magazine. Feel free to reach out to me at wprice@nrea.org with your suggestions, story ideas and concerns.

Happy reading!

A Note from the CEO



Dennis Houston

Welcome to Nebraska Magazine!

Hello to our friends throughout rural Nebraska! As the new CEO who started just 100 business days ago, one of my primary goals for the Nebraska Rural Electric Association is to "tell the story of rural Nebraska." The people, places and spirit of our rural communities is something special that we should celebrate.

It is in that spirit that we introduce *Nebraska Magazine*! You've known our magazine for years as *Rural Electric Nebraskan*. Although we have a new name for our magazine, it is still being brought to you by our amazing team of professionals and partners at NREA.

We plan to "shout the story of rural Nebraska from the rooftops of barns" all across our great state. Our new *Nebraska Magazine* will be the flagship of our communications for the Nebraska Rural Electric Association and our member organizations. We will also continue to build out a dynamic family of services to tell the stories of rural Nebraskans. Look for more exciting news in the coming months.

Nebraska Magazine is the largest magazine in the state of Nebraska with our annual circulation of more than 650,000 copies mailed directly to rural families in every corner of the state. That means our magazine is read more than 2,000,000 times each year by individuals like you and your neighbors down the road. As the publisher of *Nebraska Magazine*, we take our role very seriously and promise you that we will strive to bring you an amazing magazine that feels like home to you.

Our new magazine has "that new car smell!" It is bold and vibrant in both the rural stories we tell as well as the photos that we share. We encourage you to take it for a test drive, as together we will enjoy the highways, byways and country roads of our favorite place. A placed called rural Nebraska!

I'd love to hear what you think of *Nebraska Magazine*. Drop me a note at dhouston@nrea.org to share your feedback. We are always looking for ideas that tell the story of rural Nebraska.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from our family to yours!

Dennis Houston dhouston@nrea.org



A Conversation with Governor Pete Ricketts

This month the Nebraska Rural Electric Association had the privilege of sitting down with Nebraska's Governor Pete Ricketts to discuss the electric industry, rural Nebraska, and the upcoming Nebraska Unicameral legislative session. The following are excerpts from our discussion:

Governor Ricketts, thank you for joining us. If we have a theme for today's interview it's going to be rural Nebraska issues. What are your thoughts on the role rural public power plays in our state and in our communities?

The advantage we have is that our state is 100 percent public power, and we have the 15th lowest electric rates of anywhere in the country. This is, of course, good for attracting industry and is good for ratepayers as well. As the largest irrigating state, Nebraska uses a lot of electricity. That is a big competitive advantage for our farmers and ranchers. We are also ranked as having the seventh best energy infrastructure, which means public power continues to reinvest in our state. Public power, because they are easy to work with, has been a linchpin for drawing in companies and ultimately jobs that benefit our entire state.

Rural Nebraska has challenges when it comes to workforce and workforce development. Can you speak to the opportunities that exist and your plans to bring young folks back to rural Nebraska to fill some of the amazing career opportunities we have here in our state?

When we talk about economic development, companies ask "Are we going to have a workforce here and who are we going to need to hire?" What we have tried to do is create a talent pipeline in the state of



Nebraska. It started with a grant program in 2015 that partnered with school districts and private sector companies. The program exposes seventh and eighth graders to career opportunities that exist in Nebraska. From here students can participate in internships, earn college credit, and even be selected for college scholarships to receive the training they will need to be hired in these positions. At Sandy Creek High School in Fairfield, for example, as a result of this program, they found that 39 percent more students were interested in manufacturing careers going into high school. Companies across the state have been able to take advantage of this program to give young people the opportunity to see careers that are available in their community. These students then have the opportunity



to stay in their community and contribute. They can enjoy a great quality of life and have a great career.

Looking ahead to the 2021 legislative session, what are some of the key issues you see coming up that are going to have a strong impact on rural Nebraska?

First of all, we had a very successful 2020 legislative session. Our state senators did a wonderful job under very trying conditions. They passed a historic property tax relief bill that will get paired with our existing property tax relief fund to provide a total of \$650 million of property tax relief. We need to continue to do more to support property tax relief. We need to continue to restrain our spending so we can provide tax relief. There are going to be emerging issues dealing with the pandemic. Many industries have been impacted, and we are going to have to look at how our state can help these companies stay in business.

As we look at our 55,000 subscribers that receive our magazine, do you have a direct message for the rural families out there reading this issue?

First of all, I would like to say thank you to our rural families. Whether you are directly involved in the production of agriculture or supporting it in some way, you are vital to the security of our country. When you think of our strong supply chain for food, could you imagine what would have happened throughout the pandemic if we were not able to maintain that. All of our folks in rural Nebraska have done a great job ensuring we continue to be able to feed our country.

As we look forward to ending this pandemic, there are going to be tremendous opportunities. As I said earlier, the companies that are looking to move to Nebraska move here because of great local leadership. Local leadership and innovation is so important to welcoming new companies. We offer a tremendous quality of life here in Nebraska. There is no better place to live. It is the best place in the world.

Our conversation with Gov. Ricketts will continue in the January 2021 issue of *Nebraska Magazine*.

Photographs by Kathy Chase

Winter Barns Acros



Give in to your childhood memories: smell the hay, find the baby kittens and the fresh chicken eggs, see the stalls for the new babies—perhaps a colt or a calf; observe the bridles and saddles and feel the sunlight streaming through the cracks in the barn wood, climb the ladder to the hay loft.

The Story Behind the Journey

Kathy Chase and Dave, her husband of 47 years, have always loved road trips. After their three daughters were grown and their nest was empty, they hit the road often.

She received a new Canon DSLR camera from Dave and began photographing everything in sight. It wasn't long before the old rustic Nebraska barns began to catch her eye and inspire her heart. Dave quickly joined in and used his eagle eye to find many barns that she would have overlooked. After a few more outings, she realized that God was awakening in her a creativity and passion previously unknown to her.

In 2013 Kathy was forced to leave her job of 18 years due to the pain and fatigue of post-polio syndrome,

knowing that she needed more rest. One day she said to Dave, "I think we should photograph at least one barn in each of Nebraska's 93 counties!"... and the Nebraska Barn Journey began. She photographed the first one in Greeley County in January of 2012 and she was hooked!

After that, she never left home without her camera and a map with the Nebraska counties clearly marked. It was difficult to find a barn in some counties and they had to drive up and down a lot of roads to find one. They realized that they'd have the best chance to spot the barns hidden by the trees in the late fall or winter.

Due to the constraints of the post-polio syndrome, she usually shot photos from their truck window or

ss Nebraska



from a position of standing on the running board. They always took pictures from public roads. It would have been very difficult to track down the owners of the barns since many barns appeared to be deserted; though they would have loved to hear their barn stories.

Five years and thousands of country miles later, Kathy completed their last barn in Kimball County in the Nebraska county series in January 2017! And, the journey continues to this day.

After a few short years, Kathy Chase, with husband Dave by her side, have photographed over 500 barns, numerous windmills, old country churches, and vintage cars and trucks among other things. Kathy said, "I originally thought this was just a personal journey for Dave and me, but along the way we have been blessed by hearing many of your childhood memories of barns and the joy of seeing them brought to you."



To view additional barn photos, go to: kathychase.smugmug.com

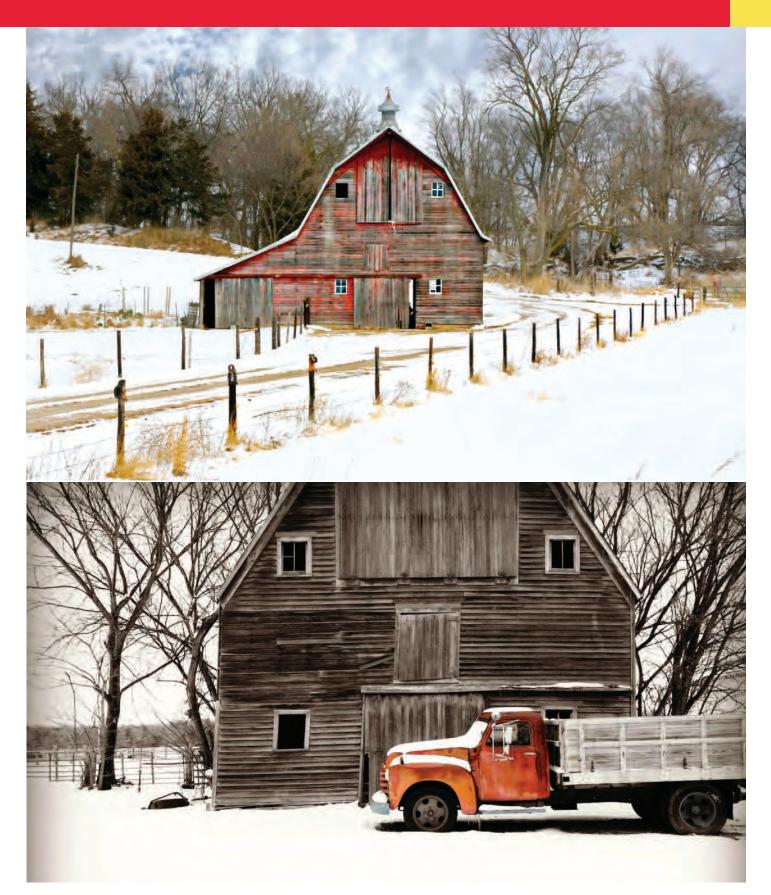
"We've been blessed by hearing many of your childhood memories of barns and the joy of seeing them brought to you." Kathy Chase - Photographer







Nebraska Magazine



Spending Time with Family at a Tree Farm

Make it an annual holiday tradition

No matter what kind of Christmas tree is your family favorite, Nebraska Christmas tree growers have your holiday covered. What better way to spend time together as a family than to channel your inner "Clark Griswold" from *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation* and go cut down your very own Christmas tree. For a current directory of Nebraska Christmas tree growers, go to the Nebraska Department of Agriculture website for a

statewide directory sorted by county.

https://nda.nebraska.gov/publications/promotion/ christmas_trees/trees.html

Here are a few Christmas tree farm tips

There's nothing like going directly to the farm and cutting down your own tree. You won't get a tree any fresher and you can pick just the right tree. But there's more to it than that.

It can be a memorable family adventure out in the country; but to make sure it doesn't become a memory in

the sense of *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*, prepare properly!

Most important: Call before you go!

This is a very seasonal business, with many small operations. Often, they run out of trees, or a storm can damage their crop, or they simply retire. So ALWAYS confirm via



phone or email that they are open the hours you expect and have what you want, before you go to the farm!

What to expect at the farm

• Saws and equipment- Saws are usually provided, and



most will cut the tree for you (usually for a small fee) if you'd rather not cut it yourself. Note: some will let you choose the tree, but not cut it yourself, so be sure to ask when you call! Most farms also provide wheelbarrows or other tools for transport. Many will wrap your tree and tie it on your car for you. I recommend you bring your own rope or bungee cords with you; they may not have it or run out.



• Shaking - The trees have been living outside all year and may well have become home to spiders. Get the farmer to shake the tree on their mechanical shaker if they have one.

• Baling - Many farms also have baling (tree wrapping for transporting) or bagging for no fee or a small fee.

• Restrooms - Look for restrooms in the listings. Many do not have them.

Here are some features to look for to have more fun:

• Hay rides, wagon rides or sleigh rides - Some farms substitute horse drawn hay rides or tractor-pulled wagon



rides - check with them before you go!

• Santa visits, if they have them, are almost exclusively on the weekends. I guess he takes a break from toy making on the weekends to do some tree inspecting.

• Refreshments - Some tree farms also have refreshments, but as that is probably their most profitable sale, you'd do well to bring your own.

• Petting zoos and farm animals - Kids will always remember the trip to the farm when they saw the reindeer!

• Extra greens - Most farms will either sell or provide for free cut branches for greens. Most also sell wreaths, garland and boughs.

• Miscellaneous - Tree stands are usually sold on the farms. Many farms also sell disposal bags which will help to make clean up after Christmas much easier!

• Gift shops - Christmas-themed gift shops selling ornaments, stockings and crafts are standard at many farms!

Trees for Troops

Many of the Nebraska Christmas Tree Growers Association members donate trees, money and time for our Nebraska military members throughout the world. More than 200 Christmas trees are donated each year. The association members say it's a great feeling to help servicemen and women have Christmas spirit in their homes when they can't be with their families during the holidays.

What to bring

• Pack for a day trip – Take some snacks, hand towels or disposable wipes and plenty of liquids to drink.

• Dress in old clothes and hiking boots or old athletic shoes; you want to be comfortable and not worried about staining or tearing your clothes! If the ground is wet, it will really ruin any nice shoe, so wear your beat up old ones! Bring heavy gloves to protect your hands and a jacket or other garment to protect your arms.

• Bring layered clothing, and some extra socks and a blanket. Dress for the weather. The kids may get wet feet, or cold. When you get back to the car, you can wrap them up in the blanket and they'll sleep all the way home!

• Don't forget the camera or cell phone for Christmas selfies. You may want to capture those memories you're making.

Transporting your tree home

• Protect your car - Place a sheet of plastic or an old blanket over the roof of your car to protect the paint and finish.

• Prepare the tree - Get the tree shaken and baled (wrapped) before loading it.

• Load the tree - Lift the tree and place it on the roof. Get help if the tree is very large.

• Tie the tree down - Wind the rope or bungee cord all around - over the tree, then under the roof and back over the tree - until the tree is secure. Tie the rope or cord securely. Pull on the tree and make sure it's tightly tied.

• Drive home safely!

by James Dukesherer, NREA Director of Community Outreach

Rural voices need to be heard on important issues

The recent elections have highlighted the importance of political engagement in our democratic process. Whether you love the debates and research each candidate, you cringe when you hear the term election season, or you find yourself somewhere in between, we all get to have a vote in determining who leads our political institutions and we have a civic responsibility to Unfortunately for rural Nebraskans, this undoubtably means that once again more legislative seats will leave greater Nebraska and relocate to Omaha and Lincoln. The 43rd legislative district covering the sandhills in north central/north western Nebraska is already larger than the State of Rhode Island! Moving seats from rural to urban Nebraska will further dilute our rural voice.

cast a ballot. During election years, we often focus on the big federal races, but at the Nebraska Rural Electric Association (NREA) the issues we focus on year-to-year are often most impacted by state and local decision-makers. Even without the fanfare of big campaign contributions and 24-hour media coverage, the issues facing the electric industry can have a significant impact on your pocketbook.

Nebraska state senators interact with public power representatives at the NREA legislative banquet.

This means we must work to ensure our rural voice is unified and heard.

At one time, the Nebraska Unicameral was considered to be a rural legislative body. This is no longer the case. No matter how you add up the votes, simply getting every rural senator on the same page supporting a bill is not enough to pass legislation. We need the support of urban

More than 10 years ago, the NREA formally recognized that our political strength comes, not from our government relations department in Lincoln, but from the active participation of our membership. We started our Grassroots Initiative program that aims to: 1) educate board members, employees, and electric ratepayers on the issues we face, 2) build stronger relationships with our elected leaders so they feel comfortable reaching out to us on issues impacting our industry, and 3) organize all of us so we will be able to collectively engage our elected leaders when our issues come to the forefront. Through this program, NREA recognized that it is public power electric rate payers that truly have the political power to make a difference. We recognized that our state's elected leaders are accountable to the public and those leaders really do care about their constituent's views, and we recognized that these leaders want to hear from us before they cast their votes.

Soon we will have the results of the 2020 U.S. Census and the Nebraska Legislature will be tasked with redrawing the boundaries of each political district; ensuring equal representation across Nebraska. senators that understand the importance of rural Nebraska to the well being of the entire state. This month's magazine issue includes a detachable directory of the 2021 Unicameral Legislature as well as biographical information about each senator. Please remove this section and use it to reach out to senators on the issue you care about.

Ultimately, we established our Grassroots Initiative because NREA needs your help. We want you to talk to your representatives, friends and family about the issues that impact your electric bill. As you can see with our new magazine look and focus on telling rural Nebraska's story, we are doubling down on sharing our message across rural Nebraska. In addition to our magazine, we also distribute information through our website (www.nrea.org) and Facebook/YouTube apps. Please follow these pages to have timely access to this information. Finally, please join our Grassroots Initiative by signing up at https://nrea-action.org. This will ensure we can reach you by email directly when we have information, videos, or a call to action to share with you.

Nebraska Legislature State Senator Directory Provided By Nebraska Rural Electric Association



A Guide to the 107th Nebraska Legislature **State Senator Directory**



District 1

school.

District 5

District 7

471-2733

Julie Slama, Peru Slama was appointed to the Unicameral in 2019. She is a graduate of Yale University and is currently enrolled in UNL law



District 3 471-2627 **Carol Blood, Bellevue** Blood served on the Bellevue City

Council and as director of the La Vista Area Chamber of Commerce.







Robert Clements, Elmwood

Clements' family has owned Elmwood's

American Exchange Bank for 79 years. He

holds a B.S. in mathematics from UNL and is a retired banker and insurance agent.

IS MOLD

District 2

Hilkemann graduated from Illinois



471-2710

Mike McDonnell, Omaha McDonnell served in the Omaha fire department for 24 years. He was the president of the Omaha Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO.

Vargas has a master's degree in education. He served on the Omaha Public Schools

Board and served as the vice-chairman of

the Legislature's Executive Board.

100

Tony Vargas, Omaha









471-27

471-2613

471-26

471-27

Megan Hunt, Omaha

District 8

Hunt holds a master's degree in political communication from UNO. She is the owner of Hello Holiday, a boutique and e-commerce company.

College of Podiatric Medicine. He established the Foot and Ankle Center of Nebraska. He served as chairman of the State Board of Health.

Machaela Cavanaugh, Omaha

Cavanaugh holds a master's degree in

public administration from UNO. She works at the Buffett Early Childhood

Institute at the University of Nebraska.

District 6



District 9

471-2723

John Cavanaugh, Omaha

Cavanaugh serves as the Assistant Douglas County Public Defender. He holds both a master's degree in environmental policy and a J.D. from Vermont Law School.



District 11 471-2612 **Terrell McKinney, Omaha**

McKinney helps coach wrestling at Omaha North Magnet High School. He is a community organizer and co-hosts a weekly podcast.



District 13 471-2727

Justin Wayne, Omaha Wayne is a lawyer and former Omaha Public Schools board member. He is the CEO of Trailblazers Constructors, LLC. He served as the chair of the Legislature's Urban Affairs Committee.



471-2629 **District 15**

Lynne Walz, Fremont

Walz is a realtor and former teacher with a degree in elementary education. In 2018, she ran for Lt. Governor on the Democratic gubernatorial ticket.



District 17 471-2716 Joni Albrecht, Thurston

Albrecht served on the Papillion City Council and on the Sarpy County Board. She farms in Thurston County.



District 19 471-2929 Mike Flood, Norfolk

Flood is an attorney and served as Speaker of the Legislature. He founded Flood Communications which operates the News Channel Nebraska television network.

District 21

471-2673

Mike Hilgers, Lincoln Hilgers is an attorney and co-founded of Hilgers Graben PLLC Law firm. He served as chairman of the Legislature's Executive Board of the Legislative Council.







District 10

Wendy DeBoer, Omaha

DeBoer graduated from UNL Law School and is working on her Ph.D. in Christian theology at UNO. She teaches philosophy and religious studies at UNO.



District 12 471-2623 Steve Lathrop, Omaha

Lathrop is a partner with an Omaha law firm. He has served as both chairman of the Legislature's Business and Labor Committee and the Judiciary Committee.



John Arch, La Vista

Arch holds an MBA from UNO. He worked in the health care division at Boys Town for 23 years. He is a past chairman of the NE Hospital Association.

District 16

471-2728

471-2730

Ben Hansen, Blair

Hansen is a graduate of Wayne State College. He is the owner of Hansen Chiropractic Wellness Center. He served on the Blair City Council.

District 18

District 20

District 22

471-2801 **Brett Lindstron, Omaha**

Lindstrom holds a degree in history from UNL and works as a financial advisor. He has served as the Legislature's Banking, Commerce, and Insurance Committee chairman.

McCollister is a business owner and served





471-2715

471-2622

Mike Moser, Columbus

Moser served as Mayor of Columbus. He has a degree in speech communications from UNL and is the owner of Columbus Music.

Nebraska Legislature State Senator Directory

471-2718













District 23 471-2719

Bruce Bostelman, Brainard

Bostelman holds a degree in business management from Bellevue University and served in the U.S. Air Force for 20 years.



District 25 471-2731 Suzanne Geist, Lincoln

Geist owns a style consulting business. She has a degree in broadcast journalism from UNL. She has held positions with the American Heart Association and serves on the board for Clinic with a Heart



District 27 471-2632

Anna Wishart, Lincoln Wishart has a degree in film studies from

Middlebury College in Vermont. She served as a member of the Lincoln Airport Authority board.



471-2734 **District 29**

Eliot Bostar, Lincoln

Bostar is executive director of the Nebraska Conservation Voters and a member of the Lincoln Electric System's administrative board of directors.



Rich Pauls, Omaha

District 31

District 33

Pauls is a former Millard Public Schools principal and administrator. He previously served in the Legislature as the chairman of the Banking, Commerce, and Insurance Committee.



471-2712 **Steve Halloran, Hastings**

Halloran is a graduate of Creighton University School of Business Administration. He is co-owner of three HuHot Mongolian Grills and served as chair of the Legislature's Agriculture Committee.

District 35

471-2617

471-2327

Ray Aguilar, Grand Island

Aguilar served in the Legislature from 1999-2008. He was appointed by Governor Johanns and served as the body's first Latino legislator. He operates a commercial cleaning service business.









District 24

Matt Hansen, Lincoln

Retirement Systems Committee.

Hansen holds a J.D. from the UNL College of Law. He serves on the board of the Child Guidance Center and is an adjunct professor at Bellevue University.

Kolterman is president of an insurance

company. He served on the Concordia



Patty Pansing Brooks, Lincoln

Pansing Brooks is a graduate of UNL Law and is a partner in her law firm. She served as senior policy counsel for Lincoln Mayor Beutler

District 30

471-2620

Myron Dorn, Adams

Dorn is a lifelong farmer and graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He served as chairman of the Gage County Board of Supervisors.

District 32

Tom Brandt, Plymouth

Brandt is a farmer and livestock feeder. He holds a degree in Agriculture from UNL and served as chairman of the Southeast Nebraska Corn Growers.

District 34

471-2630

471-2711

Curt Friesen, Henderson

Friesen is a farmer and the former Mayor of Henderson. He served as chairman of the Legislature's Transportation and Telecommunications Committee.

District 36

471-2642

Matt Williams, Gothenburg

Williams has a law degree and worked as president of Gothenburg State Bank. He served as chairman of the Legislature's Banking, Commerce, and Insurance Committee.

Provided By Nebraska Rural Electric Association



University Board of Regents and served as chairman of the Legislature's Nebraska

471-2610

District 28

















District 37 471-2726

John Lowe, Kearney Lowe is a real estate investor. He previously owned Platte Valley Brewery in Kearney. He is a former member of the Kearney Planning Commission.



District 39 471-2885 Lou Ann Linehan, Elkhorn

Linehan served as chairwoman of the Legislature's Revenue Committee. She was appointed Deputy Assistant Secretary of State by President George W. Bush.



District 41 471-2631

Tom Briese, Albion Briese is a farmer with a law degree from UNL. He served as the chairman of the Legislature's General Affairs Committee and on the Boone Central school board.



471-2628 **District 43**

Tom Brewer, Gordon

Brewer served 36 years in the Army retiring as a Colonel. He served as the chair of the Legislature's Government, Military, and Veteran Affairs Committee.



District 45 471-2615 **Rita Sanders, Bellevue**

Sanders is the former mayor of Bellevue. She is a commercial real-estate developer and owns Richmont Senior Living Retirement Campus in Bellevue.



District 47 471-2616 Steve Erdman, Bayard

Erdman is a farmer. He served on his local school board and on the Morrill County Board of Commissioners.

District 49

471-2725

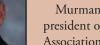
Jen Day, Omaha

Day holds a degree in Political Science from UNO. She owns and operates Artis Strength & Fitness gym in Omaha.









District 38

Dave Murman, Glenvil

Murman is a dairy farmer and former president of the Nebraska State Dairy Association. He is a Former member of the Sandy Creek School Board.

District 40 471-2801

Timothy Gragert, Creighton

Gragert served 40 years in the Army as a helicopter pilot. He retired from the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service and served on the Creighton school board.



District 42 471-2729 **Mike Groene, North Platte**

Groene graduated from UNL with a degree in agriculture economics. He is an ag experiment sales manager and served as the chairman of the Legislature's Education Committee.



Dan Hughes, Venango

Hughes is a farmer and served on the boards of the Wheat Growers Association and the NE Ethanol Board. He served as chairman of the Legislature's Natural Resource Committee.

District 46

District 44

Adam Morfeld, Lincoln

Morfeld is a graduate of UNL College of Law. He is executive director and founder of Nebraskans for Civic Reform.



District 48 471-2802

John Stinner, Gering

Stinner holds a master's degree in economics and accounting from UNL. He was president of Valley Bank & Trust Co. and served as chairman of the Legislature's Appropriations Committee.

Write to your State Senator

If you want to write your state senator during the 2021 session, please address correspondence to:

Senator (Last Name) District # State Capitol PO Box 94604 Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

State Senator Directory

471-2732

471-2805

471-2720

THE POWER OF COMMUNITY



Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperatives of Nebraska Here at your local Touchstone Energy cooperative, we're proud to be a part of it, bringing people together by providing energy for all the things you love.





On Going Home: Seeking Opportunity in Rural Nebraska

by Caleb Pollard, Founding Partner of Scratchtown Brewing Company

My wife, Christina, and I made the decision 12 years ago to move to the small community of Ord, Nebraska after living the prior 10 years in Lincoln, Nebraska. In Lincoln, Christina and I both attended college, started our careers, and family, but for our young family, something was missing.

Like many Nebraskans, my life started on a family farm five miles west of Nehawka, Nebraska. My wife, Christina, is originally from Omaha, Nebraska. As our lives progressed, we found ourselves at odds with the urban disconnect with community, the cost of living, and the drudgery and cost of commutes. We felt stuck in a rat race.

Christina and I decided to move to Ord in the summer of 2008. We wanted to leave the rat race behind, and seek out a safer, slower pace of life that we knew we would find in a small town. What made our move even easier was the fact the community offered career opportunities to my wife and I at the same time; community leaders in Ord were aware that it often takes a package-deal to bring young families home, and that's what they did. By November 2008, we were settled into new careers in Ord and our sons had a new school to call home.

The reasons for our decision to move to Ord were many, but centered on three key features: community safety, outdoor recreation, and career advancement opportunities.

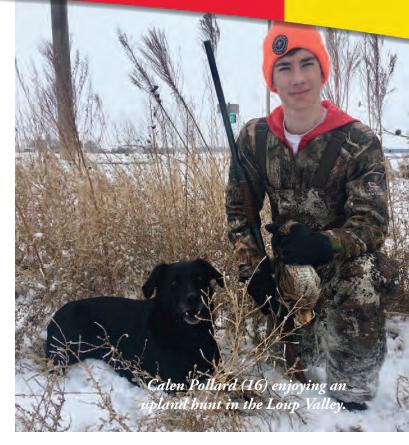
We knew Ord was a welcoming, safe community. We dreamed at the time in 2008 of living in a place where our kids could roam like we did when we were younger and grow up in a town that kept an eye on them just as we did. We found that in Ord.

Valuing our free time and love of the outdoors, we wanted quick access to Mother Nature. We love to spend all four seasons outside, and Nebraska has bountiful opportunities if you enjoy gardening, hunting, fishing, flatwater paddling and camping; all of which are our favorites. Ord and the Loup Valley continues to provide incredibly rich outdoor experiences for our family, especially now that our sons are teenagers.

Missing from our urban experience was feeling connected to "community." Making friends, fitting in, and connecting with a real community is very hard as an adult living in an urban center, even with social media today. It can be downright alienating and lonesome. Moving to Ord provided us with a real community experience where it afforded us the time and ability to make profound differences in our town that improved our quality of life.

We found that in Ord through a variety of community philanthropic and service organizations. We wanted to roll up our sleeves and dive into supporting community priorities with our community, whether it was through literacy and reading programs at our library, or recreational opportunities with planning, funding and building a new aquatic center. We found Ord was welcoming to young adults that sought to

Continued on Page 23





Safety Briefs

Bright Ideas for Safe Holiday Lighting

Sparkling lights and dazzling decorations are hallmarks of the season. Make sure your holiday decorating is done with safety in mind.

Use only holiday lights that have been safety tested and have the UL label. Before decorating, check each light strand for broken sockets, frayed cords, or faulty plugs. Always be sure to unplug the lights when replacing a bulb. Don't string together more

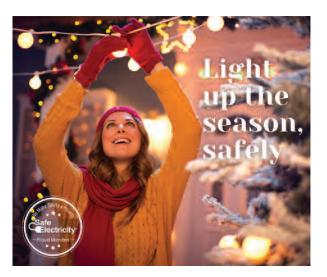
light strands than recommended by the manufacturer.

Outdoors, use only lights, cords, animated displays and decorations rated for outdoor use. Cords should be plugged into outlets equipped with GFCIs. Use a portable GFCI if your outdoor outlets don't have them.

Take extra care not to throw strings of lights over tree branches that are near power lines and service connections.

Safe Electricity offers these additional tips for safe holiday decorating:

• Place fresh-cut trees away from heat sources—such as heat registers, fireplaces, and radiators — and water



the tree frequently.

• Match plugs with outlets. Don't force a 3-pronged plug into a 2-pronged outlet or extension cord, or remove the third prong.

• Keep electric cords out of high-traffic areas. Do not run them through doorways, hide them under carpets, or staple, nail, or tack them to the wall.

• Always unplug lights before going to bed or leaving your home.

• Make sure extension cords are in good condition and are UL-approved and rated to carry the electrical load you will connect to them.

• Don't let children or pets play with light strands.

Overloaded circuits are a major cause of fire. Flickering or dimming lights, sparks from appliances or outlets, and wall plates, plugs, or cords that are warm to the touch are warning signs that demand immediate action.

If you spot an electrical danger, make sure to unplug the malfunctioning appliance or device immediately and replace with one that works properly.

Murphy



The Pollard family attends a JV basketball game against Broken Bow.

On Going Home - From Page 21

contribute to their community if they were willing to volunteer their time; that community connection was vital to us as newcomers in making new friends and connections that kept us in the community.

Finally, we wanted to be sure we moved to a community that had a clear definition of what it took to be a competitive rural community in the 21st century. Often times, rural communities shortchange the opportunities they have for career advancement for adults through one key feature: entrepreneurship. In rural communities, the support networks are in place, the cost of entry is low and competition is small for those seeking to start their own enterprises. We knew from the number of families moving back, the number of small businesses started, and the access to those wonderful recreational experiences that starting our business in Ord would work. The opportunity was waiting to be capitalized upon and we founded Scratchtown Brewing Company with our partners in January 2012.

Those dynamics encouraged us to start Scratchtown Brewing Company in downtown Ord, and those dynamics have kept us going during the COVID-19 pandemic when many in our industry are closing doors. It's been a blessing to be in Ord as a business owner these past eight months, and we honestly don't believe our business would be as resilient if we had launched the company in an urban community.

We found tremendous opportunity in rural Nebraska that we don't believe would have been possible in an urban center. Rural communities tend to downplay their competitive advantages, even often apologizing for not having the amenities you would find in urban centers. Moving to Ord, we found the reality completely opposite of the narrative. We found smalltown life to be incredibly rewarding, affording us the time and financial wherewithal to start Scratchtown Brewing Company, while still being active in our sons' academic and extracurricular activities.

Our 12-year journey is proof that not only are small towns incredibly competitive for families, but during these tumultuous times, can provide a stable community base for people and families to thrive. For 25 years, Nebraska Community Foundation has been helping the dreamers and doers of this state reach their goals.

Giving back to the community

Each morning as the sun rises over Greater Nebraska, so do thousands of residents. Each new day presents an opportunity to make a difference in their communities, no matter how big or how small. From main street entrepreneurs, to farmers tackling autumn harvests, to local teachers wearing 100 different hats, Nebraskans put their all into their work.

The state is grassroots to its core – local volunteers take the lead, convening to map community assets and create roadmaps to brighter tomorrows. These homegrown leaders make decisions at a local level, working together with their neighbors to build stronger communities.

Donors from all walks of life are contributing to the Keith County Foundation Fund (KCFF), a Nebraska Community Foundation (NCF) affiliated fund. Residents like Pam and Mike Abbott make gifts that allow KCFF to use its ever-growing unrestricted endowment's annual payout for community betterment projects. The endowment acts as a community savings account. Only a portion of the investment earnings are distributed every year, providing a steady stream of revenue that keeps up with inflation. The Abbotts, who raise cattle in the county, opted to donate ag commodities to KCFF's endowment.

"I would encourage other producers to think about gifts of ag products," Pam said. "The hardest thing is to understand all the different charitable giving tools that are available and what's right for your particular situation, and thanks to Nebraska Community Foundation, they know and can review these with you."

Unrestricted endowments made it possible for

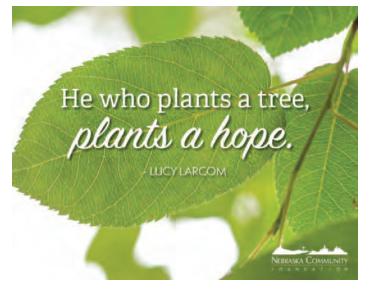
volunteers to offer aid as the COVID-19 pandemic settled in Nebraska. Some affiliated funds used endowment payout to ease the transition to remote learning in local schools, others used it to connect families to loved ones in nursing facilities, and others used the money to boost other local organizations who feed and shelter those in need.

For Rhonda Schuessler in Sidney, an \$184,000 grant from the Sidney Community Donor-Advised Fund served as an essential lifeline. Her daycare, Here Wee Grow Child Development Center, closed for 10 weeks in the spring. The gift from the Sidney Community Donor-Advised Fund – along with federal CARES Act funding – kept Here Wee Grow aloft, making it possible to keep up with expenses and pay wages for the center's employees through the closure.

"I cannot be more thankful," Schuessler said. "Those donations are the wings that are carrying us right now. It allows us to continue to build a greater Nebraska and make a positive difference in our community."

Underlying every gift to an NCF-affiliated fund is a passion for community, even when donors have long left their Nebraska hometowns. The family of Merle Guenther, including his sister Twila, made a \$1 million gift to the Crofton Community Foundation Fund (CCFF) in his honor. The siblings grew up in the Knox





County town, but moved to Wisconsin while still young. Crofton left a lasting impression on the family, however, and now their gift will bolster the fund's unrestricted endowment as well as an ongoing effort to construct a new pool.

"We have never had anyone make a sizeable donation like this to our community," said CCFF Advisory Committee Chair Jon Zavadil. "All of us are in awe right now. All of these dreams we've had and have been planning for are starting to become a reality."

For 25 years, Nebraska Community Foundation has been helping the dreamers and doers of this state reach their goals. NCF-affiliated funds are present in 270 Nebraska communities across 82 of the state's 93 counties. The vibrant, resilient network of affiliated funds are making sure all dreams are welcome, from the Missouri River to Chimney Rock. Visit NebraskaHometown.org to find a fund near you and get involved today in helping your town embrace a brighter future.

"Through our NCF affiliation we have had this amazing opportunity," said Kathy Heard of the Howells Community Fund. "It has grown this community tremendously. It has given us a future."

Energy Sense

by Pat Keegan

Three Steps to an Efficient Attic

: I'm convinced we could reduce our high heating bills if we add more insulation to our attic. How do I make sure everything's done right?

A : It's great that you're focused on your attic, as this is often the area you can get the most bang for your buck on energy efficiency investments. Insulation is actually just one part of the energy-efficient attic puzzle. Here are a few tips to keep in mind as you prepare to make your attic more efficient.

Step 1: Sealing

Attics are often the place where warm air leaks out of the home in winter or into the home during summer. Trouble spots include anything that comes through the attic floor, such as recessed lights, the chimney, the attic hatch and pipes, and ducts or wires coming through the attic floor.

It's best to properly seal these trouble spots before adding or improving the insulation. Invest a small amount of money in the necessary supplies, like caulk, expanding foam, or weather stripping, to seal any air leaks in your attic.

Step 2: Ventilation

Many attics are under-ventilated, which allows moisture and heat to build up. Moisture causes harmful mold and wood rot. During the summer, a poorly ventilated attic is prone to overheating, which can bake shingles and shorten their life. During the winter, a warm attic can melt snow on the roof, causing it to run into your gutters and then freeze, causing ice dams.

Proper attic ventilation lets air flow from a low point to a high point. This is usually done by installing soffit vents and insulation baffles around the perimeter, plus vents near the peak of the roof. If there is no way to install enough attic ventilators, an attic fan can be installed to provide mechanical assistance to exhausting overheated air.

Step 3: Insulation

The three main types of insulation for attics are loose-



Insulation baffles allow air to move from the soffit vents to flow freely into the attic space. Photograph by Mark Nichols

fill, batt and rigid. Whichever type you have, it needs to provide a high-enough level of insulation for your region, measured in R-value.

Batt and rigid insulation will often have the R-value printed on them. Loose-fill, which is blown in, is the most common for attic floors, and its R-value is approximately its depth in inches multiplied by 2.8. Generally speaking, your attic should have 14 to 24 inches of loose-fill insulation if you live in a northern state and 11 to 14 inches if you're in a southern state. You can find the recommended level for your region at www.energy.gov.

If you have loose-fill insulation that is less than the recommended amount, you should be able to simply add more on top of it, as long as there aren't any moisture, rodent, ant or termite problems. If your existing loose-fill insulation was installed before 1990, it could be Vermiculite, which may be contaminated with Asbestos. Asbestos can cause cancer when particles are released into the air, so it's a good idea to have the insulation tested. If it's contaminated, have it removed by a professional before beginning work.

Remember to seal and insulate any walls in the attic that border conditioned space, such as skylight openings.

Some of these steps can be challenging, so consider hiring a professional contractor. If you're a DIY pro and decide to do some of the work on your own, be aware of potential hazards. Disturbing old wiring can cause shorts in your electrical system, and roofing nails will often pierce the attic ceiling.

We hope these tips will help you take the next steps to a more energy-efficient attic.

Top Acid Reflux Pill Quietly Slows Premature Aging, Users Report Big Health Boost

Clinical research shows an active ingredient that restores GI health without shots, prescription, or side effects can slow the aging process; studies find the pill helps protect users from metabolic decline, cardiovascular issues, and serious conditions that accompany premature aging.

Seattle, WA – A published study on a leading acid reflux ingredient shows that its key ingredient improves digestive health while maintaining health levels of inflammation that contributes to premature aging in men and women.

And, if consumer sales are any indication of a product's effectiveness, this 'acid reflux pill turned anti-aging phenomenon' is nothing short of a miracle.

Sold under the brand name AloeCure®, its ingredient was already backed by research showing its ability to neutralize acid levels and hold them down for long lasting day and night relief from bouts of heartburn and, acid reflux, gas, bloating, and more.

But soon doctors started reporting some incredible results...

"With AloeCure, my patients started reporting, better sleep, more energy, stronger immune systems... even less stress and better skin, hair, and nails" explains Dr. Liza Leal; a leading integrative health specialist and company spokesperson.

AloeCure contains an active ingredient that helps improve digestion by acting as a natural acid-buffer that improves the pH balance of your stomach.

Scientists now believe that this acid imbalance could be a major contributing factor to painful inflammation throughout the rest of the body.

The daily allowance of AloeCure has shown to calm this inflammation through immune system adjustments which is why AloeCure is so effective.

Relieving other stressful symptoms related to GI health like pain, bloating, fatigue, cramping, acid overproduction, and nausea.

Now, backed with new scientific studies, AloeCure is being doctor recommended to help improve digestion, and even reduce the appearance of wrinkles – helping patients look and feel decades younger.

FIX YOUR GUT & FIGHT INFLAMMATION

Since hitting the market, sales for AloeCure have taken off and there are some very good reasons why.

To start, the clinical studies have been impressive. Virtually all participants taking it reported stunning improvement in digestive symptoms including bouts of heartburn.

Users can also experience higher energy levels and endurance, relief from chronic discomfort and better sleep, healthier looking skin, hair, and nails.

A healthy gut is the key to a reducing swelling and inflammation that can wreak havoc on the human body. Doctors say this is why AloeCure works on so many aspects of your health. AloeCure's active ingredient is made from the famous healing compound found in Aloe Vera. It is both safe and healthy. There are also no known side effects.

Scientists believe that it helps improve digestive by acting as a natural acid-buffer that improves the pH balance of your stomach and helps the immune system maintain healthy functions.

Research has shown that this acid imbalance contributes to painful inflammation throughout your entire body and is why AloeCure seems to be so effective.

EXCITING RESULTS FROM PATIENTS

To date millions of bottles of AloeCure have been sold, and the community seeking non-pharma therapy for their GI health continues to grow.

According to Dr. Leal, her patients are absolutely thrilled with their results and are often shocked by how fast it works.

"For the first time in years, they are free from concerns about their digestion and almost every other aspect of their health," says Dr. Leal, "and I recommend it to everyone who wants to improve GI health before considering drugs, surgery, or OTC medications."

"All the problems with my stomach are gone. Completely gone. I can say AloeCure is a miracle. It's a miracle." Another user turned spokesperson said, "I started to notice a difference because I was sleeping through the night and that was great. AloeCure does work for me. It's made a huge difference."

With so much positive feedback, it's easy to see why the community of believers is growing and sales for the new pill are soaring.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND ALOECURE

AloeCure is a pill that's taken just once daily. The pill is small. Easy to swallow. There are no harmful side effects and it does not require a prescription.

The active ingredient is a rare Aloe Vera component known as acemannan.

Millions spent in developing a proprietary process for extracting acemannan resulted in the highest quality, most bio-available levels of acemannan known to exist, and it's made from organic aloe.

According to Dr. Leal and leading experts, improving the pH balance of your stomach and restoring gut health is the key to revitalizing your entire body.

When your digestive system isn't healthy, it causes unwanted stress on your immune system, which results in inflammation in the rest of the body.

The recommended daily allowance of acemannan in AloeCure has been proven to support digestive



"ACCIDENTAL" ANTI-AGING BREAKTHROUGH: Originally developed for digestive issues, AloeCure not only ends digestion nightmares... it revitalizes the entire body. Some are calling it the greatest accidental discovery in decades.

health and manage painful inflammation through immune system adjustments without side effects or drugs.

This would explain why so many users are experiencing impressive results so quickly.

REVITALIZE YOUR ENTIRE BODY

With daily use, AloeCure helps users look and feel decades younger and defend against some of the painful inflammation that accompanies aging and can make life hard.

By buffering stomach acid and restoring gut health, AloeCure's ingredient maintains healthy immune system function to combat painful inflammation... reduce the appearance of winkles and help strengthen hair and nails ... maintains healthy cholesterol and oxidative stress... improves sleep and energy.... and supports brain function by way of gut biome... without side effects or expense.

Readers can now reclaim their energy, vitality, and youth regardless of age.

Research shows a daily dose helps with:

- Immune support
- Cardiovascular
- Relief from Bowel Discomfort
- Acceleration of wound healing
- Joint Health
- Strength of Skin, hair, and nails

HOW TO CLAIM A FREE SUPPLY TODAY

This is an exclusive offer for our readers. And so, AloeCure is offering up to 3 FREE bottles and FREE S&H with their order. While supplies last you may also receive a FREE book on Aloe Vera health benefits.

A special hotline number has been created for all residents. This is the best way to try AloeCure with their 100% satisfaction guarantee, and any free gifts are yours to keep no matter what.

Starting at 5:00 AM today the phone lines will be open for 48 hours. All you have to do is call TOLL-FREE **1-800-748-3280**, the special promotion will automatically be applied.

Important: Due to a surge in sales supplies are not guaranteed beyond the next 48 hours. Call now to not lose out on this offer.

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Celebrate the season with holiday dishes

A true holiday celebration calls for sharing moments with loved ones and creating memories that can last a lifetime. Crafting a sweet dessert to cap off the festivities is a perfect way to come together in the kitchen and enjoy the moment with those who matter most.

These Gingerbread Cookies made with C&H sugar can be a hallmark holiday treat that allow kids to help in the process. Once they're out of the oven, ask little ones to help decorate the festive and delightful cookies.

Visit chsugar.com to find recipes perfect for entertaining and celebrating with family throughout the year.

If you need a last-minute appetizer or want to impress your friends, but don't have the time to spend hours making something, consider this easy-to-make, easy-toeat cheesy treat.

This Cheeseball recipe calls for a handful of common household ingredients like cream cheese, cheddar cheese, vegetables and Worcestershire sauce rolled together and chilled for a tasty dip served with crackers. For added flavor, it's made using Buddig Beef, which has been feeding traditions for more than 75 years with its time-tested appetizer.

Find more holiday recipe ideas at buddig.com/recipes.



Gingerbread Cookies

- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
- 1/2 cup C&H Dark Brown Sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1/4 cup molasses
- 1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves Royal icing

In large bowl of electric mixer fitted with paddle attachment, cream butter and sugar about 2 minutes on medium speed until light and fluffy. Add egg and molasses; mix until well incorporated.

In separate bowl, whisk flour,

baking soda, salt, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves. Use mixer on low speed to add to butter mixture until combined and dough is formed.

Divide dough in half, wrap with plastic film and refrigerate at least 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 350° F and line baking sheets with parchment paper.

Flour clean work surface. Roll dough 1/8-1/4 inches thick. Cut out shapes with desired cookie cutters.

Transfer cookies to lined baking sheets and bake 10-12 minutes, or until firm. Let cookies cool on baking sheets 2-3 minutes then transfer to cooling rack. Cool completely.

Decorate cookies with royal icing.

Reader Submitted Recipes



Holiday Cheeseball

- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 2 cups (8 ounces) finely shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 can (2 1/4 ounces) sliced black olives, drained
- 2 tablespoons minced green onion
- 2 tablespoons minced red bell pepper
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 2 packages (4 ounces) Buddig Beef or Ham, chopped, divided
- 1 package assorted crackers

In large bowl of mixer on medium speed, beat cream cheese and cheddar cheese until creamy. Mix in black olives, green onion, red bell pepper, Worcestershire sauce, pepper and 2 ounces chopped beef until well combined.

Form into ball. Wrap in plastic wrap.

Chill at least 2-3 hours to allow flavors to blend.

Just before serving, roll in remaining chopped beef until completely coated.

Serve with assorted crackers.

Almond Toffee

- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, cut up
- 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
 - 1 Tablespoon light corn syrup
 - 1 cup almonds, chopped
 - 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips & 1 cup butterscotch chips, mixed

Cook butter, sugar, and syrup over high heat until it registers 300 degrees on candy thermometer. Quickly pour toffee mixture onto prepared 15" X 10" baking pan. Refrigerate till cool. Then spread 1 cup melted chocolate/butterscotch chips over the toffee. Sprinkle with 1/2 cup chopped almonds. Refrigerated 15 minutes or so to set topping. Turn the toffee bar over and spread with 1 cup melted chocolate/butterscotch chips and 1/2 cup chopped almonds. Put in refrigerator to set. When ready, break into pieces and put in container to freeze for Christmas or eating whenever.

Margaret Trojan, Beaver Crossing, Nebraska

1 cup butter

- 3/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
 - 1 egg
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- Malted Milk Cookies 2 tablespoons instant hot
 - chocolate 1 teaspoon baking soda
 - 1/2 teaspoon salt
 - 2 cups crushed malted milk balls

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Spray several cookie sheets with vegetable oil; set aside. In a medium bowl, cream butter and sugars. Beat in egg and vanilla. In a large mixing bowl, combine flour, hot chocolate mix, baking soda and salt. Gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture. Add malted milk balls and stir well. Shape dough into 1 1/2 inch balls. Place 2 inches apart on baking sheets. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes, until firm to touch. Cool 5 minutes and then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Store in an airtight container. Makes 3 dozen.

Maureen Pischel, O'Neill, Nebraska

Easy Pecan Pralines

- 1 package instant butterscotch pudding
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 1/2 cups evaporated milk
- 1 Tablespoon butter
- 1 1/2 cups chopped pecans

Mix all except pecans in a heavy pan – bring to a full boil – stir and cook 3 minutes to a soft ball stage (240 degrees). Remove from heat – add pecans – beat till thick and looks shiny. Drop 2-inch patties onto waxed paper to set. Makes about 15 patties.

Doris Rempe, Laurence, Nebraska

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