



the Wheat Belt Connection

HAPPY SAINT PATRICK'S DAY MARCH 17

MARCH 2019

Plan to Attend
The March 22 Customer Meeting
12:00 Noon to 3:00 pm
Lunch will be Served

Door
Prizes

Door
Prizes

**President's Welcome and Report
Business Update**

Kim Christiansen, General Manager NREA

Nebraska Rural Electric Association

Kim joined the Nebraska Rural Electric Association in November of 2017, from the Kansas Electric Cooperatives Inc., where she served as director of Government Relations and legal counsel. Kim brings three decades of organizational leadership to NREA from her past experience.

**Sallie Atkins, Agriculture Director
for Representative Adrian Smith**

Sallie Atkins is a rancher from Halsey, Nebraska. She and her husband, Al, have a commercial Angus and crossbred herd with both spring and fall-calving cows. They also custom background calves and develop heifers on their Sandhills ranch. They have three grown daughters and six grandchildren.

After being active on the volunteer side of the beef industry for many years, Sallie served as a director and past Chairman of the Nebraska Beef Council and became the Executive Director for eight and a half years. She was an officer for Nebraska Cattlemen, and Chairman of the Nebraska Ag Leadership Council and the Nebraska State Fair Board.

Atkins was named to the UNL Block & Bridle Hall of Fame, honored with the Public Service to Agriculture award, elected to the Nebraska Hall of Ag Achievement, Nebraska Volunteer of the Year award and Lifetime Friend of the Fair award for her work with the Nebraska State Fair.

In 2012, Atkins joined the staff of U.S. Senator Mike Johanns and in 2016, she was named Ag Director for U.S. Congressman Adrian Smith for Nebraska's Third District.

Wheat Belt Connection

Editor

Pam Wieser

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Drawing Winner

Yolanda Hruska

Congratulations to Barry Klemoff, our January "Lucky Winner!" Barry has been a long-time customer of Wheat Belt. For his prompt payment, he receives a \$50 credit.

If you would like to be included in our next drawing, and avoid the \$5 delinquent fee, please send your payment before the 18th of the month. For your convenience we offer several options: Automatic Bank Draft, Automatic Credit Card or Pay Your Bill Online using our secure Auto-Pay system. For more information give us a call or visit wheat-belt.com, and select the Customer Services menu.



**Prize Drawings
Throughout the Meeting**

Trees and Outages

by Pam Wieser

It's Spring, and warm weather is just around the corner. As I am writing this, it is with much anticipation of that warmer weather. Negative wind chills and arctic temperatures have been the norm for the past three months.

There is nothing that says spring like the planting of trees and shrubbery. We just ask that when you do, keep in mind the easement under and around our lines and poles, and the mature height and width of the trees you are planting. You don't want to nurture and grow that tree, and then find that it causes your power to go out every time the wind blows.

Outages caused by trees because of wind and ice are the most common. Those annoying blinks are often caused by momentary contact with tree limbs. A tree limb can sway severely in the wind, and more so, if it is covered in frost and ice. This type of issue is very hard to find when inspecting line for the cause.

We love trees too, but must clear trees and branches from the line to make sure you have the power when you need it most!

Quotes to Ponder

Irish Sayings:

"May you have the hindsight to know where you've been, the foresight to know where you're going, and the insight to know when you're going to far."

Unknown

Irish Blessing

"May the road rise to meet you. May the wind always be at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face, and rains fall soft upon your fields. And until we meet again, May God hold you in the palm of His hand."

Irish Sayings and Toasts

"A friend's eye is a good mirror."

"As the big hound is, so will the pup be."

"It is a long road that has no turning."

"Put silk on a goat, and it's still a goat."

"Beautiful young people are works of nature, but beautiful old people are works of art."

"May the hinge of our friendship never grow rusty."

"May your troubles be as few and as far apart as my grandmother's teeth."

The Irish are known for their charm and speech, they have the art of telling someone where to go, and they still look forward to the trip.



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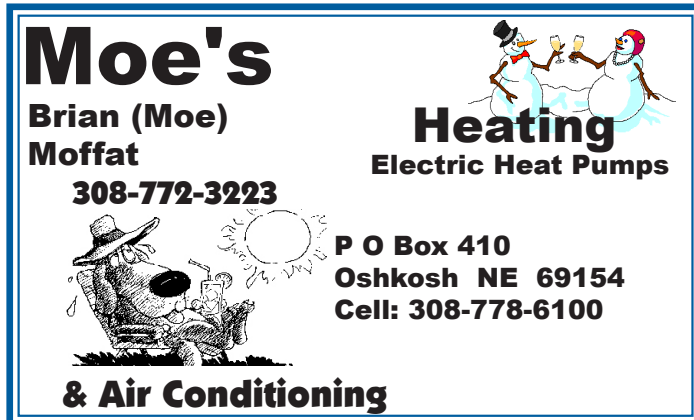


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Tim Lindahl
General Manager

Tim's Tidbits

Little Heaters Big Usage

Guest Editorial
by Pam Wieser



I wish I had a kilowatt for every time I have heard, "I just have one or two of those little heaters, you know the ones that are just a little box." Oh yeah, we know!

Some of the Infrared Heater companies even claim to save large amounts of money, but most people don't understand how the savings are calculated or how the heater would have to be used to produce savings. I recently read one ad that said their new heater/cooler only costs \$10.48 a month in electricity. In the same ad, it says it heats 1,000 sq/ft wall to wall up to 90 degrees. OK, this unit is capable of using 1,500 watts of electricity, and 1,500 watts will use 1.5 kWh for every hour it runs at 1,500 watts, so at nine cent per kWh, you could run this unit about 78 hours of the 720+ hours in a month. Electric heat is 100 percent efficient, and some of the smaller heaters will distribute the heat more efficiently depending on the type of fan or heating elements they use, but if I can heat my home for \$20, sign me up!

We caution you to be very conscious of the Safety information, and to always be aware of where you place the unit before using. Some units will specifically state that they should not be left unattended while others are designed and manufactured for full-time use. I don't know of a year that I have not heard of a home

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fire caused by space heaters improperly used or from the cords they use to supply the power to the unit. They pull a substantial amount of power, the cord used must be heavy enough to pull the load it produces. Often people cover the cords, which then gets hot and melts causing a fire. Children and adults become complacent and throw items near or on them, which in turn, become fire hazards.

This time of year is when we get the most high-bill calls from customers using small electric heaters, because many use them in areas such as water-well pits, garages or cold rooms. Even if they are not turned to high and have lower settings, such as 750 watts, just remember 1,000 watts equals one kWh, so if the unit is running 720 hours in the month because the average temperature for the month is 30 degrees, it will use 540 kWh, and will cost you around \$54 plus tax. If it is running at 1,500 watts, it will be double. Now consider the cost if you are running more than one.

The best way to save money is to use systems that are over 100 percent efficient. For example, a heat pump. For inexpensive alternatives, seal leaks around windows and doors, weather-strip and weather proof, seal and caulk around foundations and anyplace air and cold can penetrate. Insulating may be a little costly, but will save you money, if you do not have sufficient insulation for this brutal climate. Oh, and hope for an early Spring!

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Safety First

BY PAM WIESER

Galloping power lines may sound ridiculous, but they really do occur and can be very dangerous. These lines can bounce and buck enough to hit another line, damage themselves enough to cause a power outage, or even fall to the ground.

The most common cause of galloping lines is ice that builds up on one side of a power line as a result of strong winds. This buildup creates an airfoil, which changes the flow of air around the normally round line. This change in air flow can cause the power line to start to bounce.

Once galloping starts, there is not much a power company can do to alleviate it until winds die down. This is why many power lines have objects, like twisted wire or round or angular pieces of metal attached to the line. These are devices placed on power lines to help reduce the galloping of lines and prevent potential danger.

If you encounter galloping lines, stay away, warn others to stay away, and contact your utility. In addition to the possibility of power outages, there is a danger of the lines or other electrical equipment breaking loose and falling and of ice being dislodged from the lines and falling to the ground.

Storms at any time of the year can pack damaging winds, which can knock down power lines and blow trees and limbs onto power lines, which can cause power outages.

When you see power lines on the ground, stay away, warn others to stay away, and contact the electric utility or 911. Lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be live.

Any utility wire, including telephone or cable lines which are sagging or down, could be in contact with an energized power line also making them dangerous. So stay away from all lines.

Be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard. Downed power lines can energize objects around it, such as chain link fences and metal culverts.

Keep in mind that a line that is "dead" could still become energized during power restoration efforts or improper use of generators.

Never drive over a downed line. It could cause poles or other equipment to come crashing down.

Taken in part from safeelectricity.org

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